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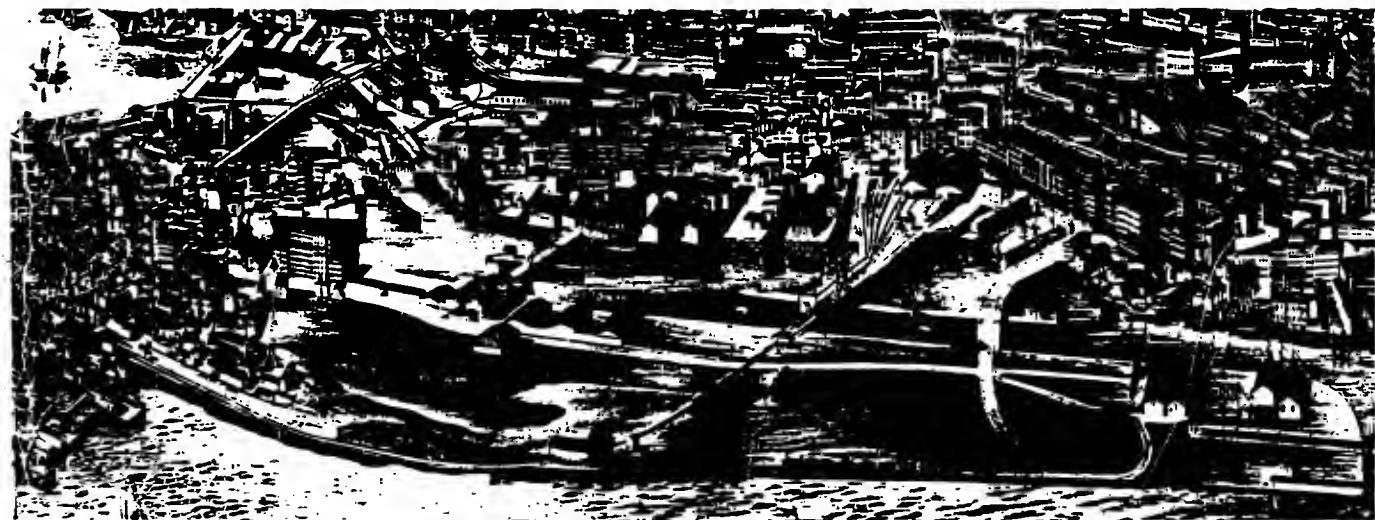
BRA

15/11

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FORT POINT HISTORY



LAND FILL & FORM

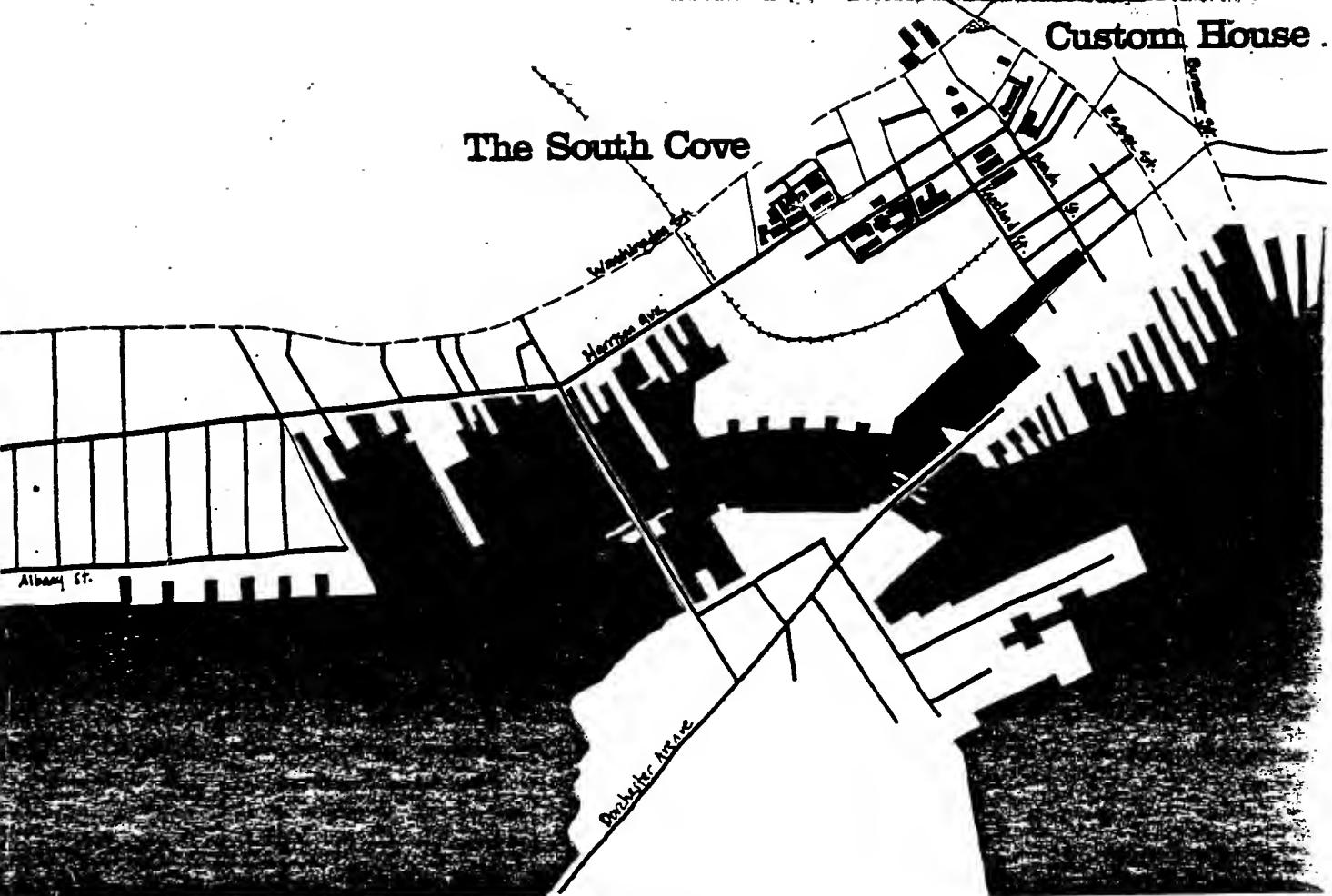
1850: The Clippership Era

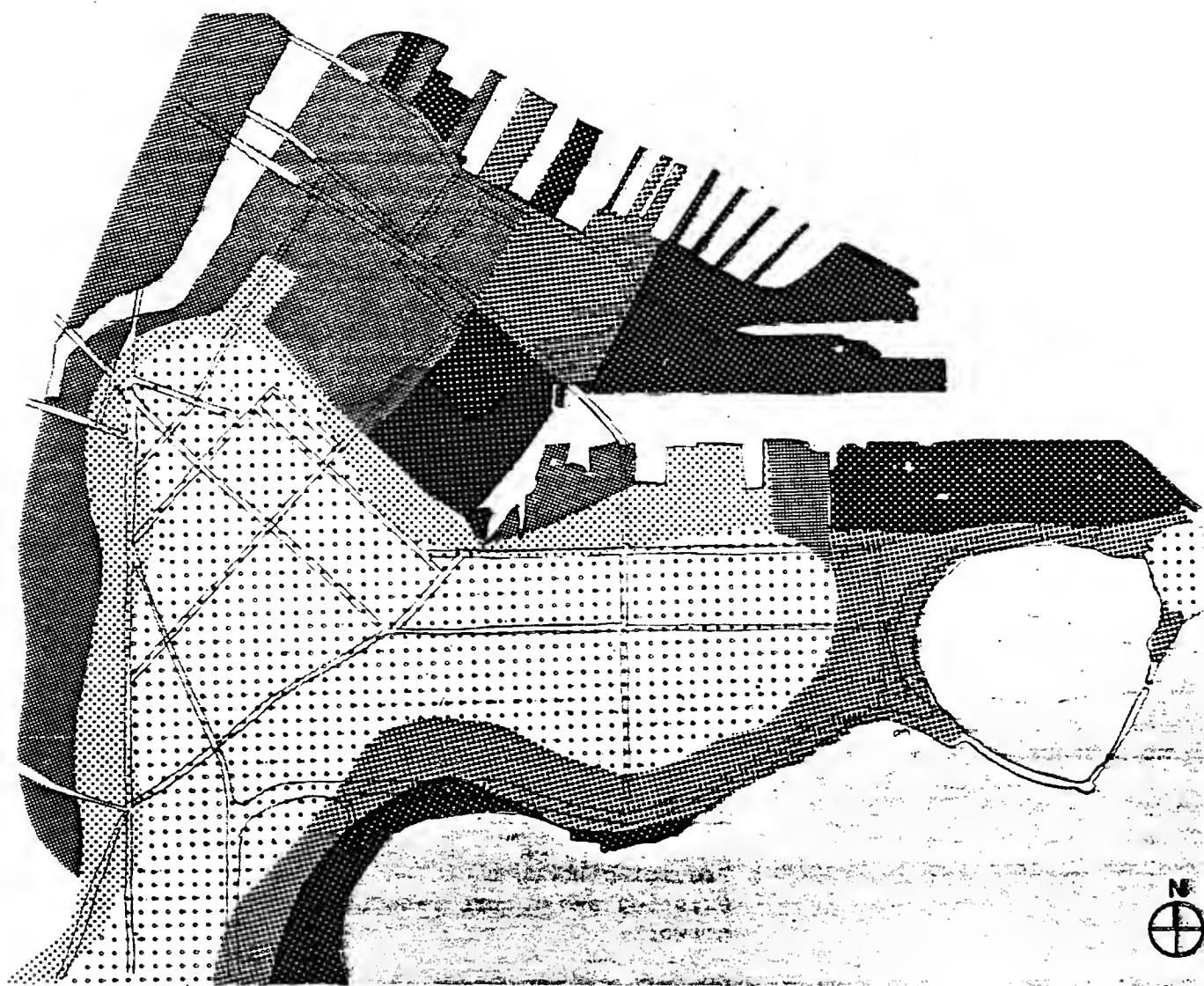
Street Network

- Remaining Streets, 1800-1850
- Remaining Streets, pre-1800
- Earliest Routes to the Sea

Sites & Structures

- Remaining Structures, 1800-1850
- Remaining Structures, pre 1800
- Site in Continuous Use





Landfill History of South Boston

Legend

- [Dotted pattern] Original Peninsula
- [Cross-hatched pattern] 1800-1860
- [Solid dark pattern] 1860-1890
- [Horizontal line pattern] 1890-1900
- [Vertical line pattern] 1900-

History of the Fort Point Channel and the South Bay

What is presently the Fort Point Channel area was, until the early 19th century, marshland and tidal flats. Its western shore was known as South Cove, and to the east was known as Dorchester Flats. These shores led into the South Bay, which extended to Roxbury and terminated in the Roxbury Brook and Dorchester Creek. South Boston was an undeveloped area with ten families. Boston Neck and Roxbury, which made up the western shore of South Cove, were defense areas for Boston Proper during the Revolution, but was most important as the only roadway to the mainland.

"Boston by the late 19th century, was laced with a complex network of channels, canals and river entrances. The intersection of these busy waterways with an expanding road network developed on filled land created the need for scores of moveable bridges throughout the city. Travel in almost any direction from center of the city was often interrupted by the operation of these devices, which were a common feature of the waterfront. By the early 20th century eight such bridges crossed over Fort Point Channel to serve new development in South Boston. The importance of these structures can be judged by the fact that during the 1890's, nearly 19,000 vessels, steamers, sailing boats and tugs passed through the Congress Street Bridge carrying cotton, molasses, spices, wood, dye, fruit, shoes, and cattle, among other cargo. The seven which remain today include:

Dover/West Fourth St. -- The earliest bridge route to South Boston was first built in 1805. It was rebuilt again in 1858 and the present structure dates back to 1876; it consisted of a fixed span and a simple drawbridge. Today, only the fixed portion remains.

Broadway-- first built in 1871, later replaced by a swing bridge in 1914.

Old Colony RR -- an 1886 drawbridge, later replaced by the rolling bascule bridge now servicing South Station.

Dorchester Avenue -- originally a retractile bridge, now fixed in place and owned by the US Postal Service.

Summer Street -- originally a railroad bridge, replaced in 1898 by a retractile bridge, where the current Summer Street was constructed. The retractile bridge type was a design unique to Boston and used at many locations. Today, only 2 remain: at Summer Street, which has been fixed in place, and further along the same route at L Street in South Boston, which still operates.

Congress Street -- a single leaf bascule bridge, built in 1930 to replace an earlier draw bridge. The current structure contains elegant light standards; its counterweight still hangs poised over Congress Street, although the bridge has been fixed.

Northern Avenue-- a 1908 swing bridge of steel and concrete; the last route across the channel to be opened to traffic! ¹



MAP OF
BOSTON,
Issued gratuitously by
THE HEROIC PHAETON CO.

Copyright, 1882.
By Simpson, Davenport, & Co.

In 1804, South Boston was annexed, and legislation was passed to allow land fill to create land for commercial development. The South Boston Bridge, also known as the Dover/West Fourth Street, was opened as a fixed span/draw-bridge in 1805, the first of nine bridges to span the South Bay.

In 1805, the Front Street Corporation began land-fill operations in South Cove, beginning the expansion of Boston Neck. In 1833, the South Cove Associates continued development of the South Cove by filling 75 acres of mud flats for a large railroad terminus for the Boston and Worcester railroads. The western shore of the Cove was substantially completed by mid century.

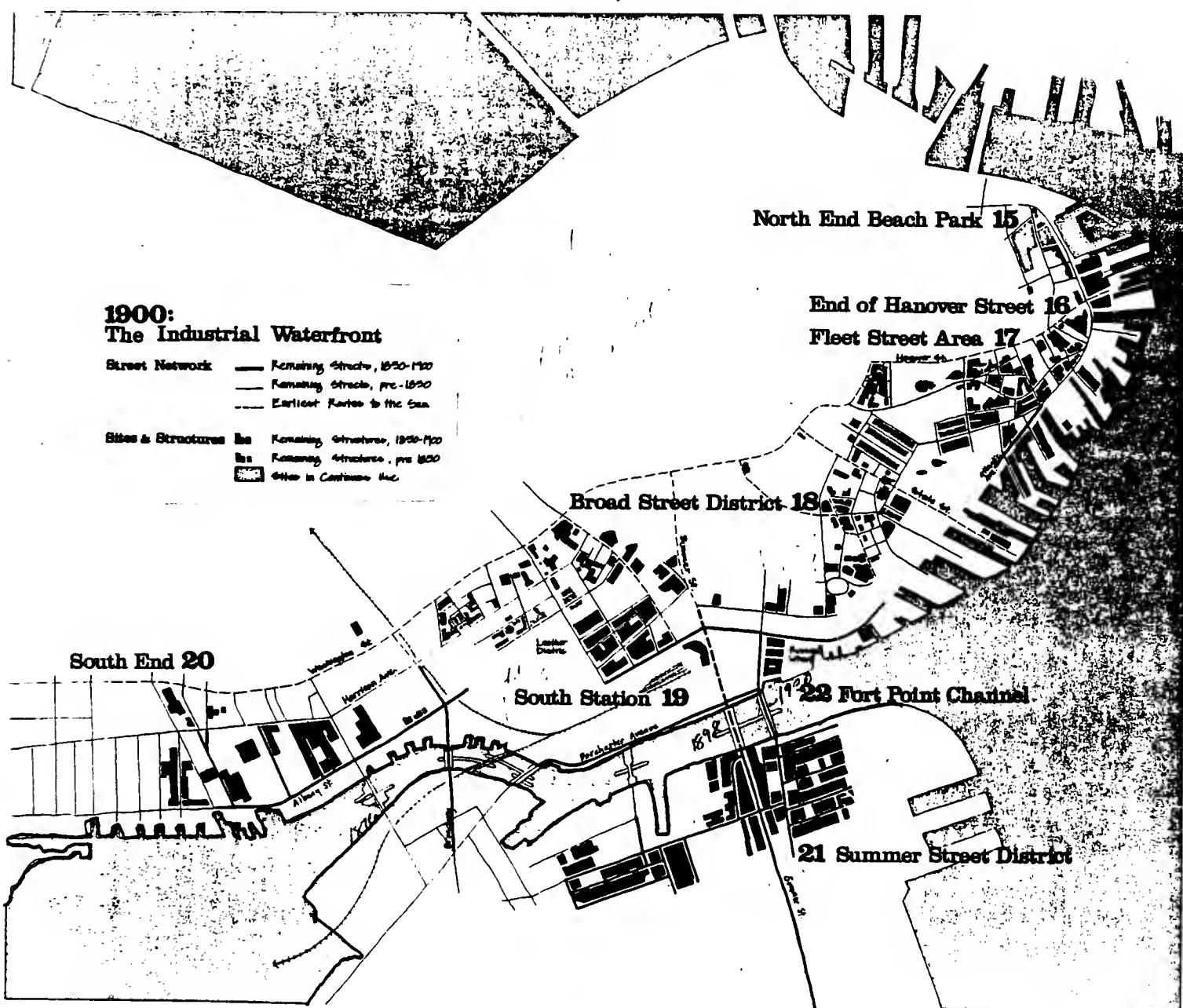
In 1836, the Boston Wharf Company began its series of land fill operations along the east bank of the South Cove, between Dorchester and Northern Avenues. By the 1870's their reclamation had narrowed the waterway and established the eastern bank of a channel. Around 1870, dredging operations began in the Channel itself, to accomodate the larger vessels berthing in Boston. By 1890 the Boston Wharf Company filling operations were completed, and the Channel was protected by a seawall. The company had continually constructed docking facilities and warehouses and streets to serve their thriving industrial development.

The Fort Point Channel's role as a shipping and distribution center began its decline by the 1940's. The wool industry was then severely threatened by the invention of synthetics. This also marked the beginning of the general decline of the New England region for manufacturing, as companies either went out of business or moved south and west, both a result of high energy costs and drying up of cheap labor previously supplied by immigrants. The Fort Point Channel area began to serve regional, rather than international, markets. Some of the once busy Boston Wharf Company warehouses were razed and made into parking lots. And, as trucking and air freight outpaced rail and shipping, the Fort Point Channel's advantages as an intermodal distribution point was lost.

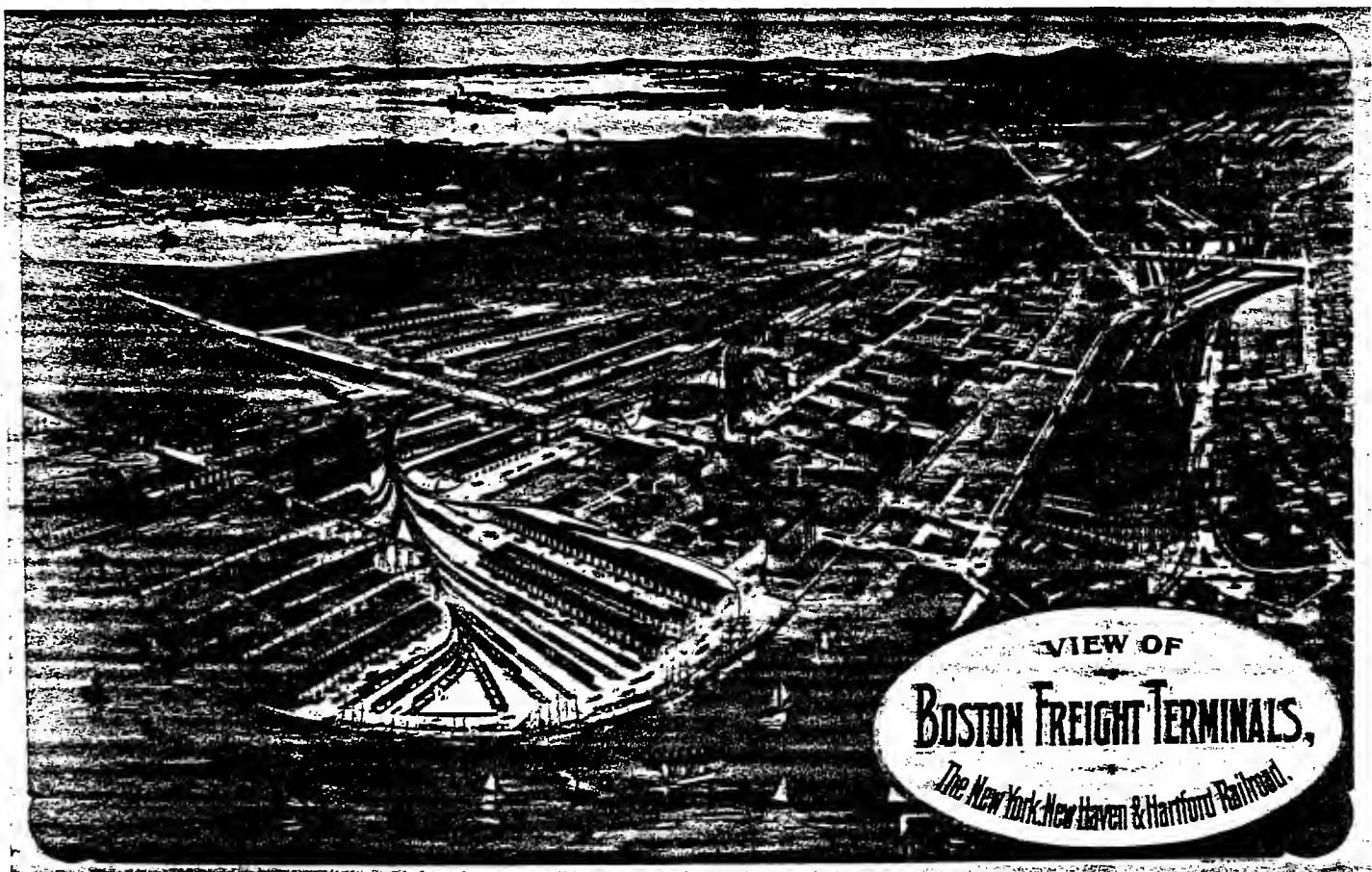
Locally, other factors contributed further to the Channel's decline. The Mass Turnpike and South-East Expressway made trucking cheaper in the Boston area than rail. The Central Artery (1959) cut off the Leather District, South Station and Fort Point Channel area from Central Boston. The remaining South Bay was completely filled in by the 1960's negating the previous need for the Channel to remain open as a waterway. Dorchester Creek and the Roxbury Canal were culverted and emptied into the end of the Channel. The reclaimed South Bay became the location of the Southeast Expressway (1959), the incinerator (1958), the New Boston Meat and Poultry Market (1969), maintenance facilities for the MBTA and City (1970's), and the railroad yards.

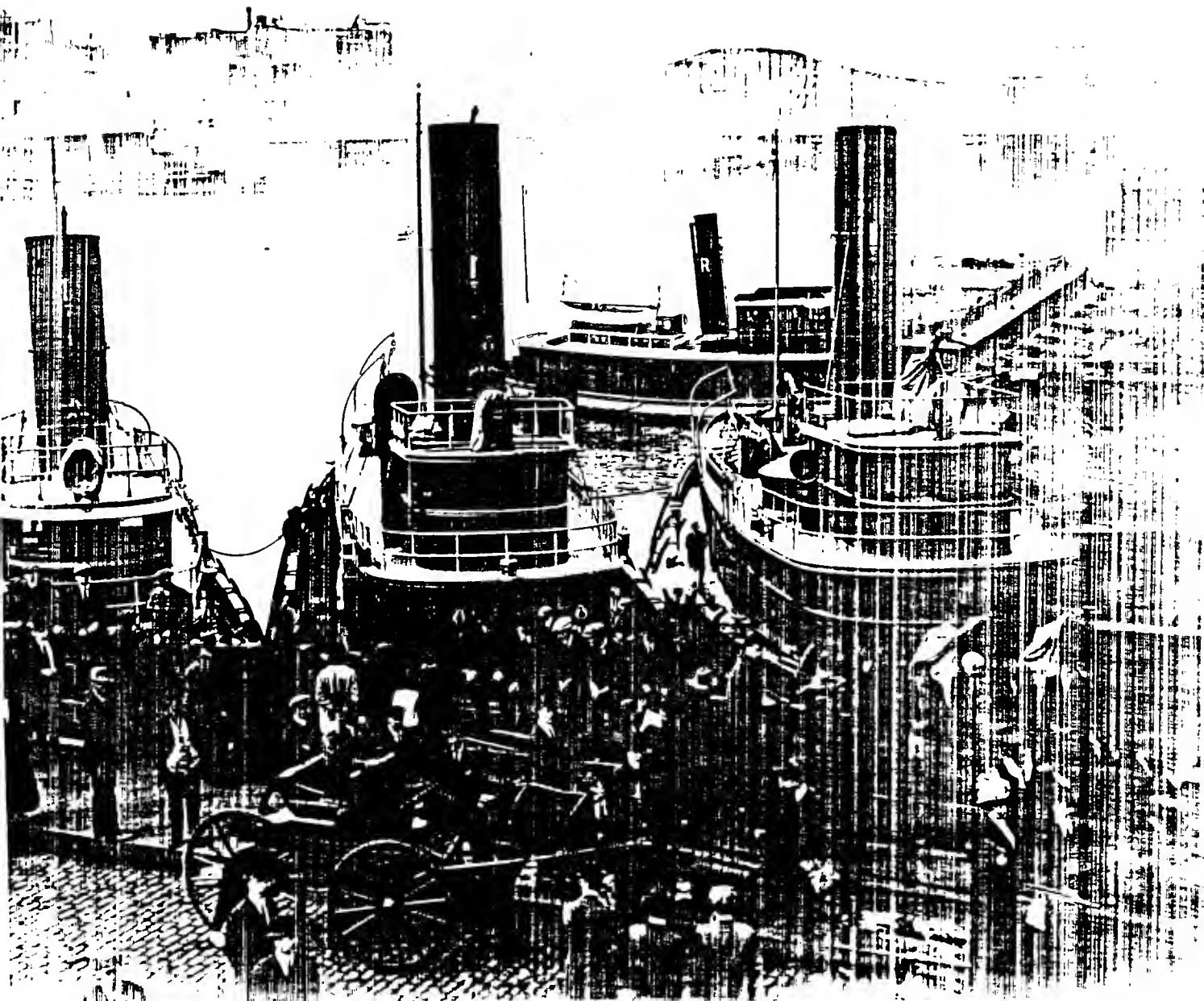
As the wharves became un-used, much of the Channel's shoreline was replaced by non-maritime uses. The Gillette plant replaced the American Sugar Refinery operation on the east shore, and the United States Postal Service built a regional headquarters on the western shore.

Moveable span bridges over the Channel were largely transformed. Most bridges, when replaced or refitted were done so with a fixed span type to reduce congestion for the commuters and manufacturing firms which depended upon them for connection to Boston.

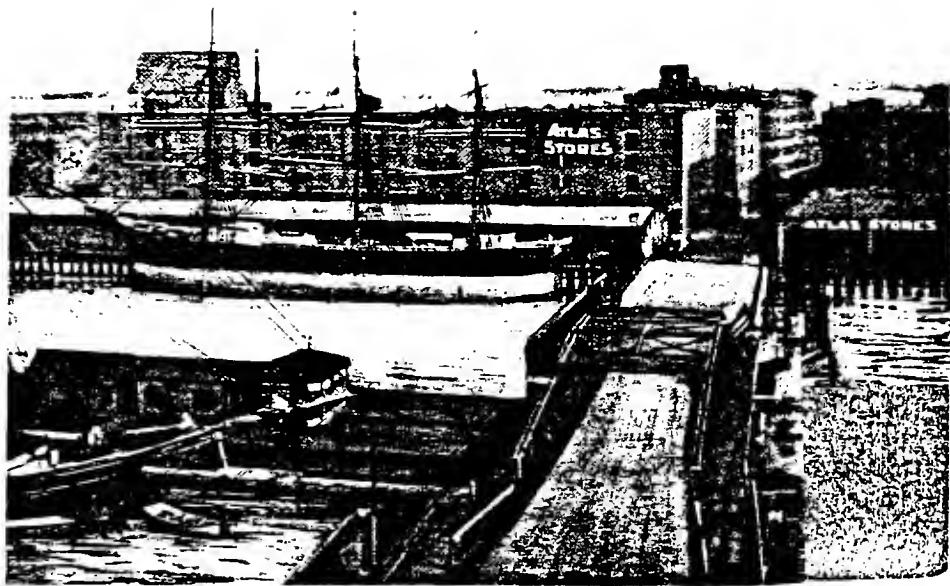


VIEWS & ACCESS

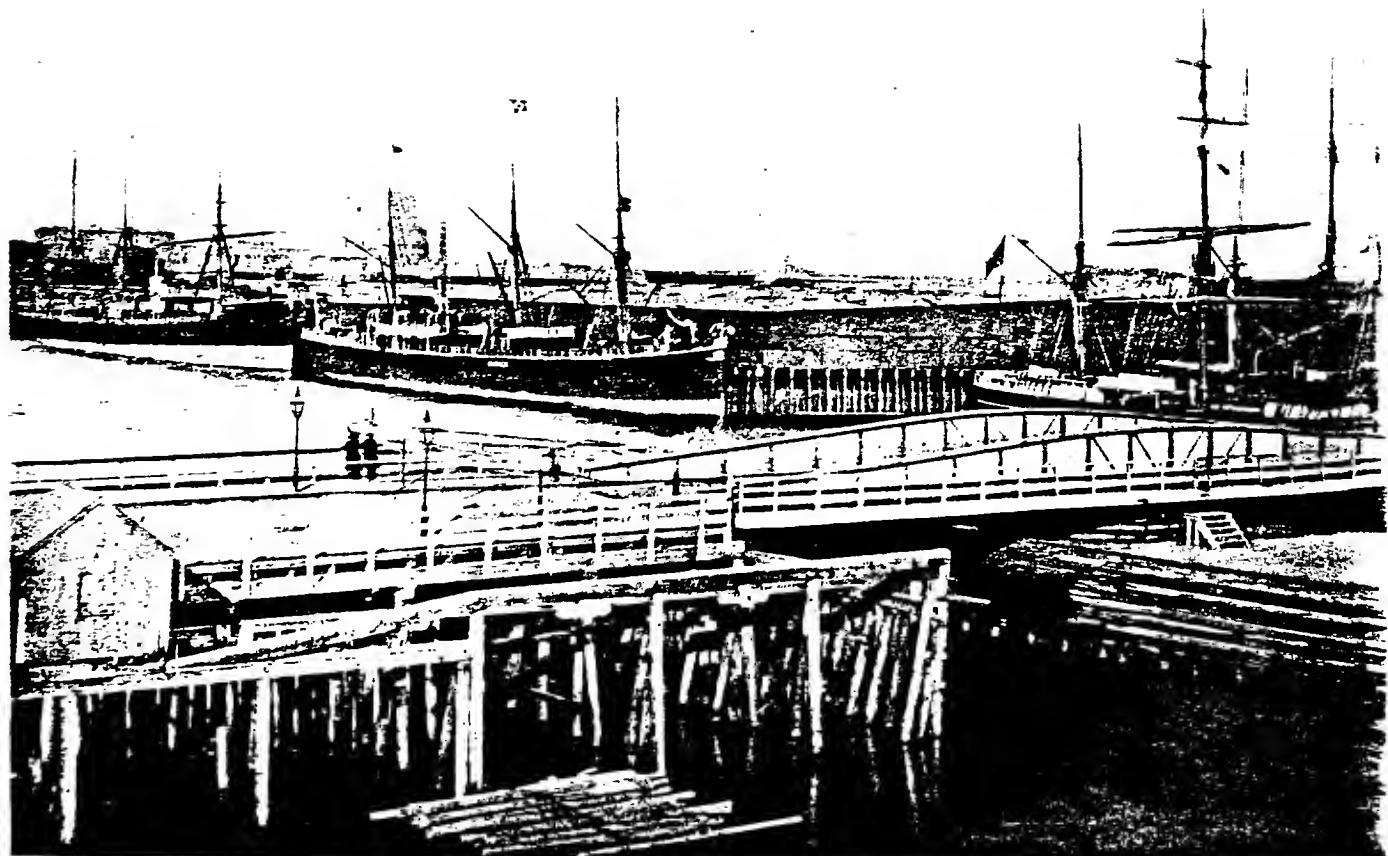




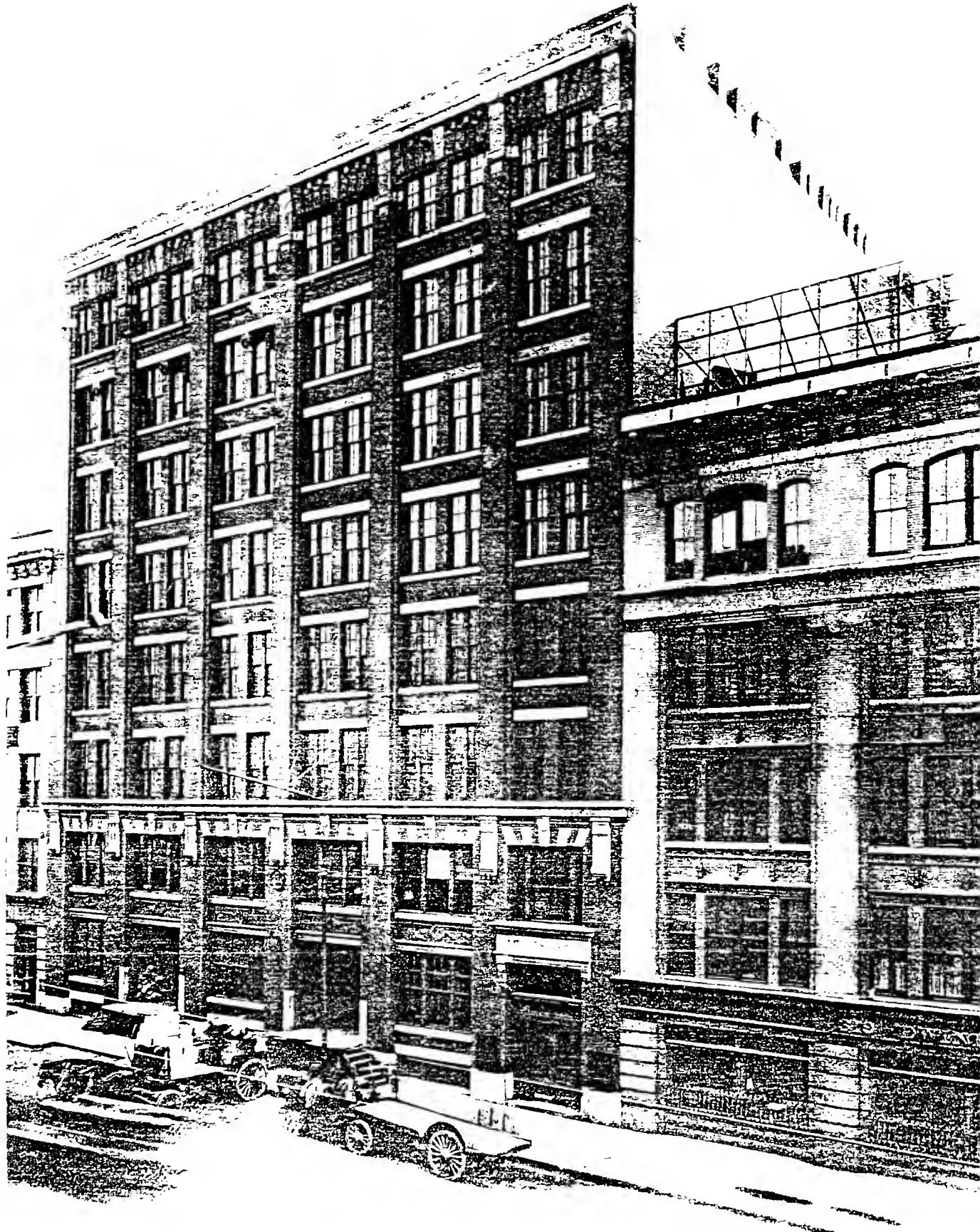
Boats at Fort Point Channel, ca. 1900.
Congress St in foreground. Northern Ave. Bridge
in background.



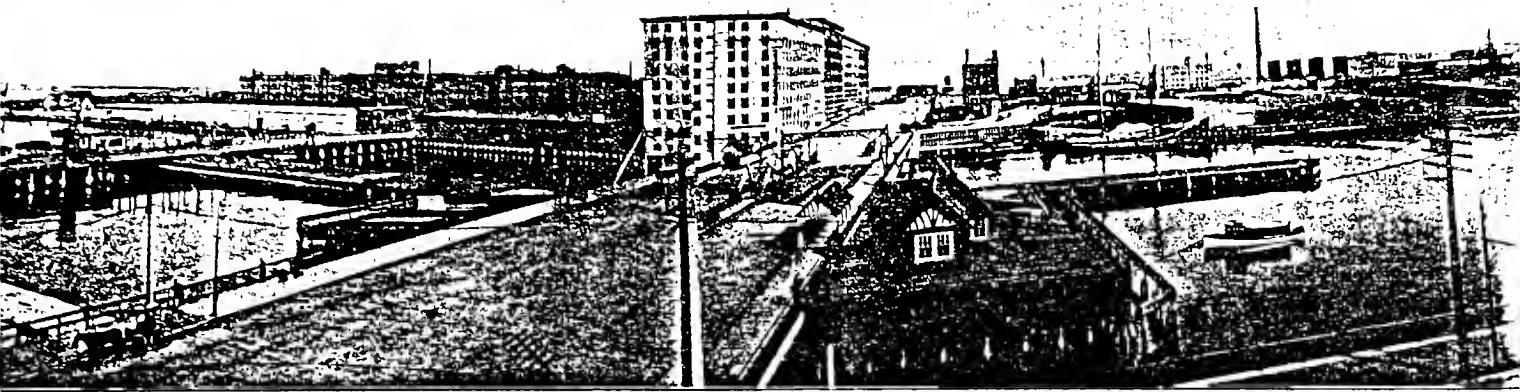
VIEW OF THE PROPERTY OF THE BOSTON WHARF COMPANY
From Congress Street.



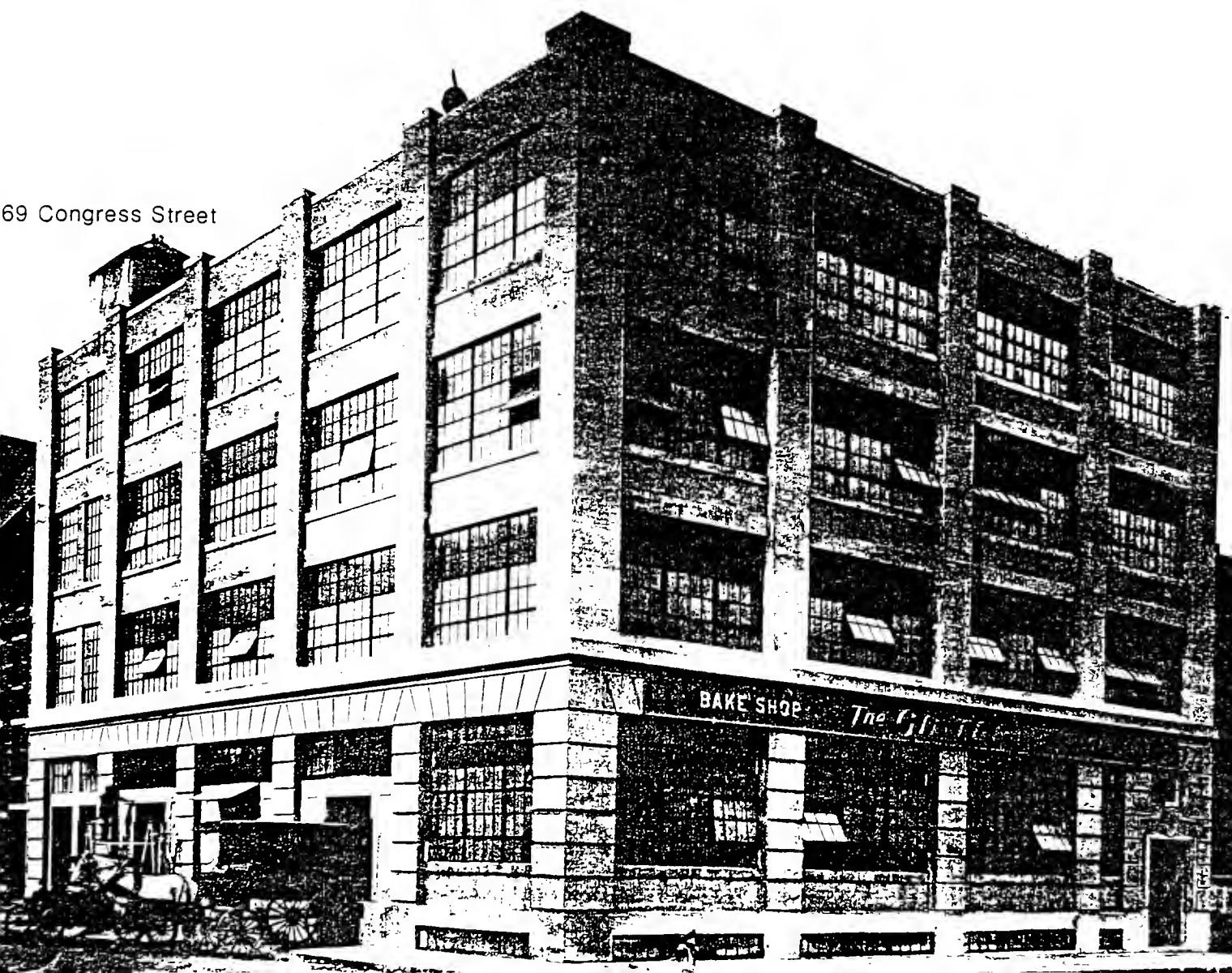
VIEW OF THE PROPERTY OF THE BOSTON WHARF COMPANY. From Mt. Washington Avenue.



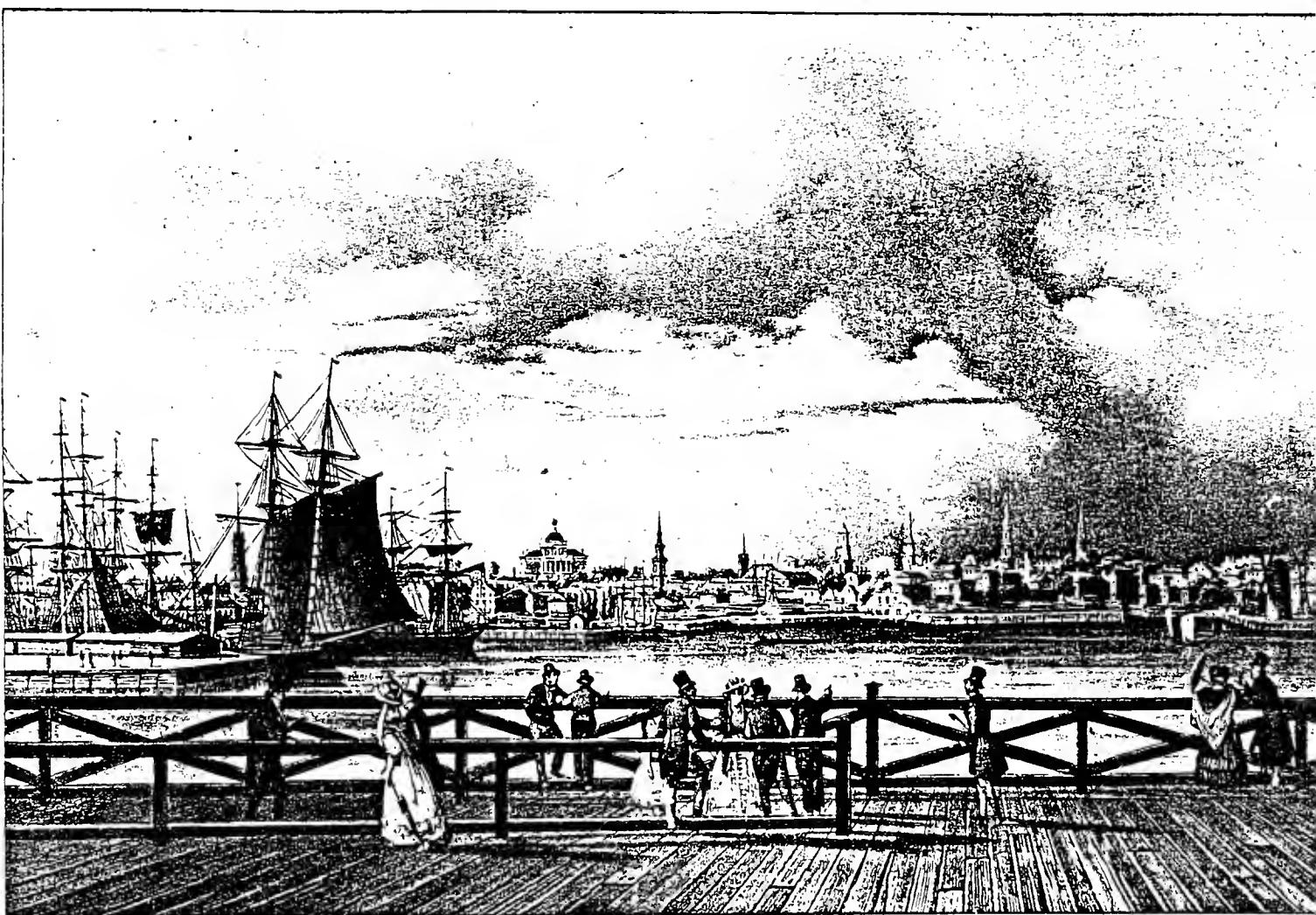
321 Summer Street



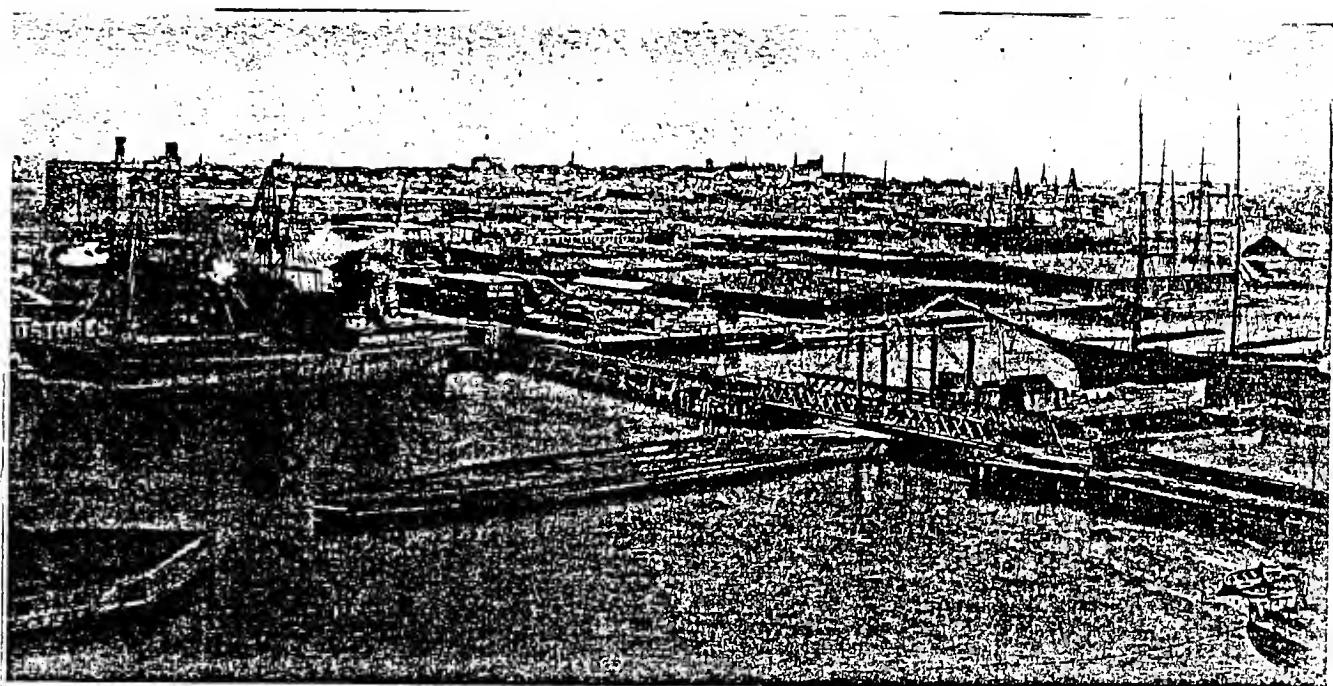
NEW SUMMER STREET EXTENSION.



69 Congress Street



View of Boston & S.Boston Bridge



From a photograph by Frank E. Porter

VIEW OF THE OLD NEW ENGLAND RAILROAD BRIDGE OVER FORT POINT CHANNEL

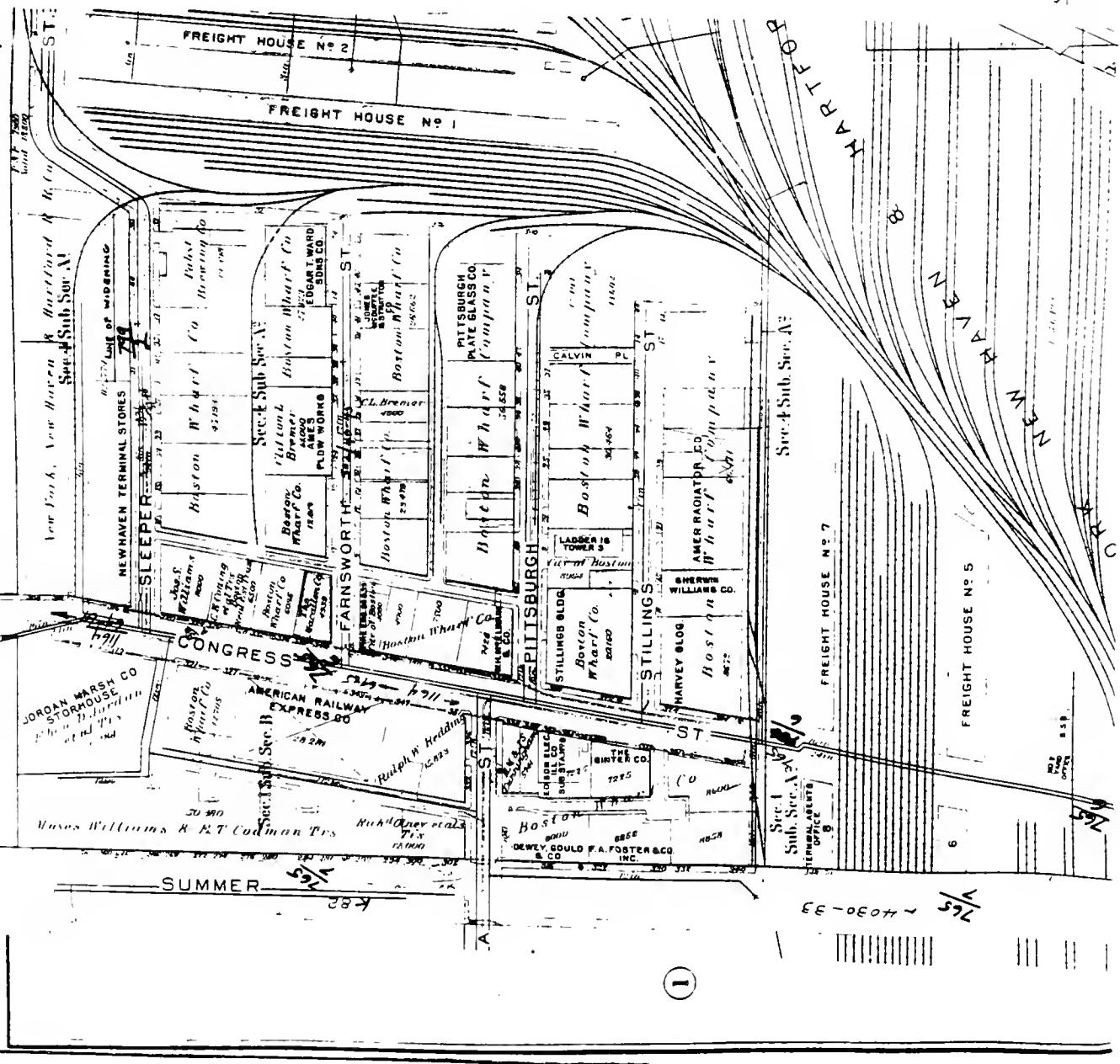
The site of the present Summer Street bridge, taken about 1893 from the top of building at 303 Congress Street looking southeast. The property across Fort Point Channel (in middle background) is part of the property of the Boston Wharf Company. The site of the present South Station is at the right end of the bridge. As many as sixty-four sailing vessels have been seen in the early days tied up to the wharves of this Company. Most of these ships had brought sugar and molasses, there being two large (molasses) distilleries here at that time, carrying on a very large business. It is said that there were as many as 20,000 barrels lying on the wharves, and on hot days the firemen used to come and play cold water on the barrels to keep them from exploding.



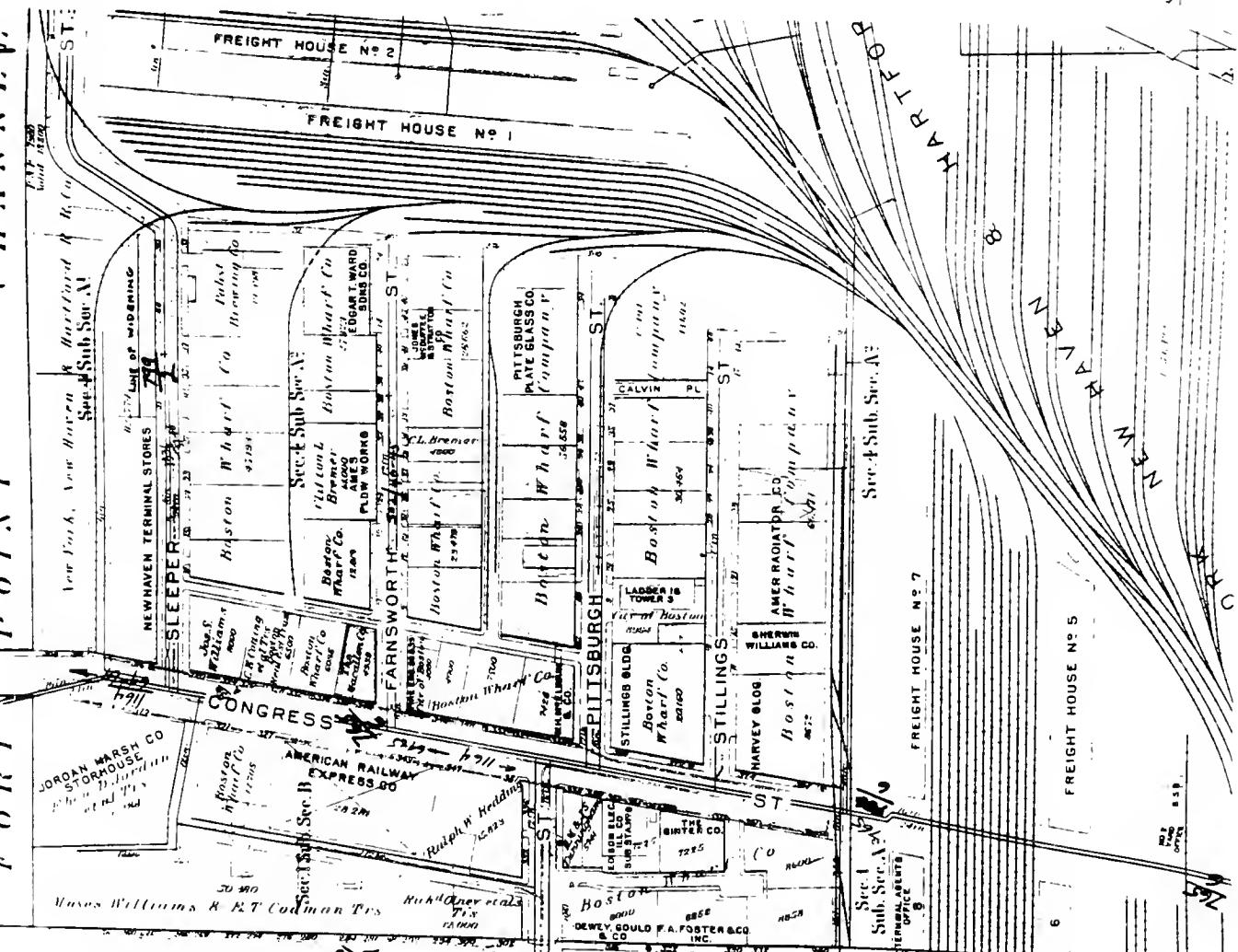
INDUSTRIES & ACTIVITIES



For $r > T$ the following holds:



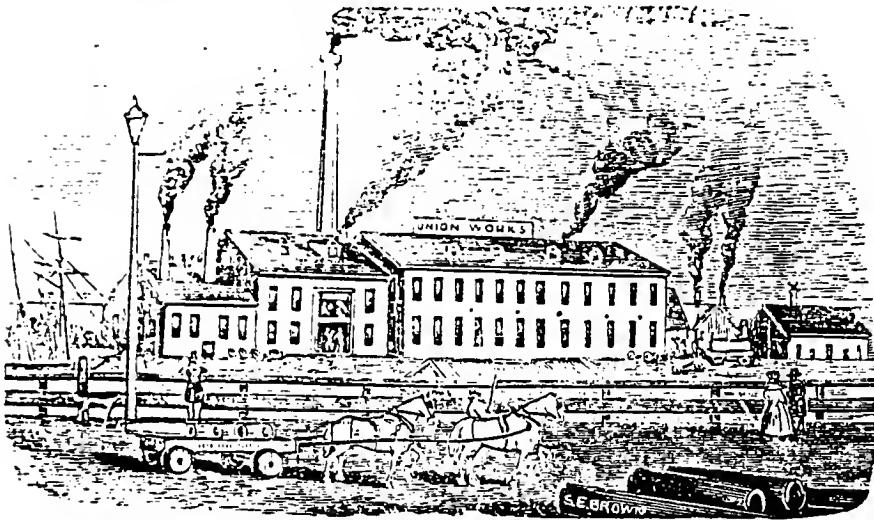
C. H. J. VAN RENEN



UNION WORKS, SOUTH BOSTON,

SETH WILMARTH,

PROPRIETOR.



MANUFACTURER OF
LOCOMOTIVE AND STATIONARY STEAM ENGINES AND RAILROAD
FIXTURES;

Machinists' Tools of every description; also, Mill Gearing and Shafting. Job Work, of every description, executed at short notice.

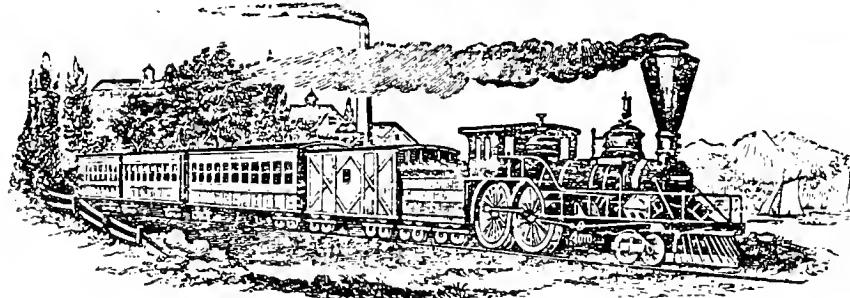


GROUP OF TEAMS OWNED BY H. G. JORDAN, Coal Dealer, of 30 Dorchester Avenue, South Boston, and President Boston Coal Club.

Steam Engines.

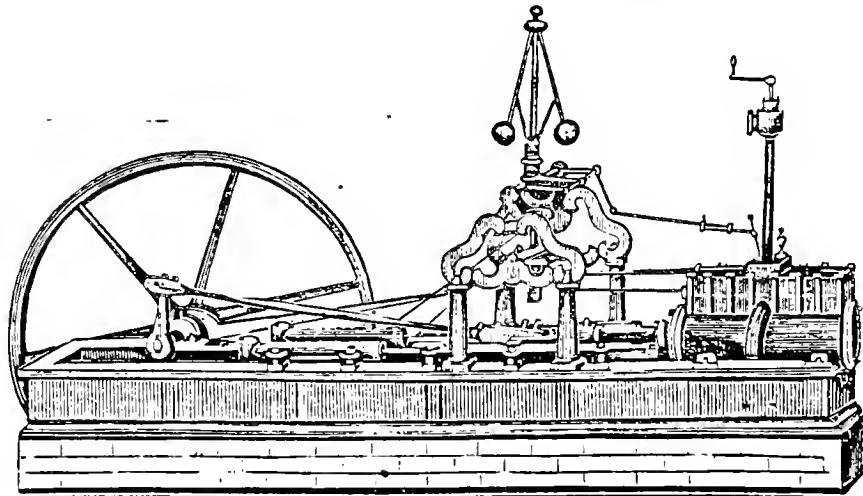
GLOBE LOCOMOTIVE WORKS.

INCORPORATED, MARCH 28, 1854.



Cor. of A and First Streets, South Boston, Mass.

SOUTHER, PICKERING AND OTHERS, PROPRIETORS.



WILL MANUFACTURE AND REPAIR TO ORDER

LOCOMOTIVE, STATIONARY, AND PORTABLE

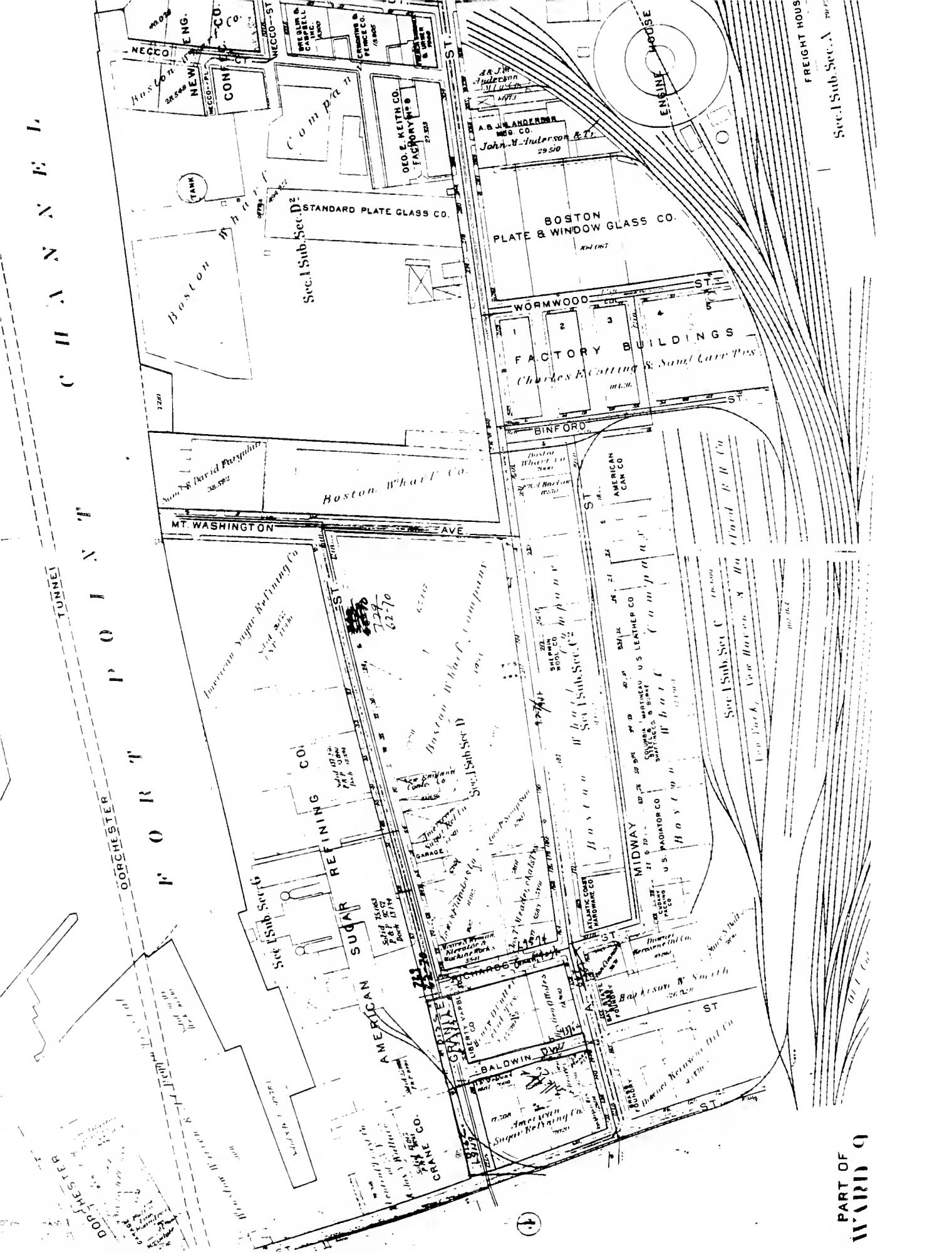
S T E A M E N G I N E S.

Otis's Patent Excavators and Steam Dredges, for deepening Rivers, Docks, Harbors, &c.
Sugar-Mills, Saw-Mills, and Steam Boilers of all kinds, also General
Machinery, at short notice, and in the best style of work-
manship, on favorable terms.

ALL ORDERS EXECUTED WITH DISPATCH. ORDERS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY SOLICITED.

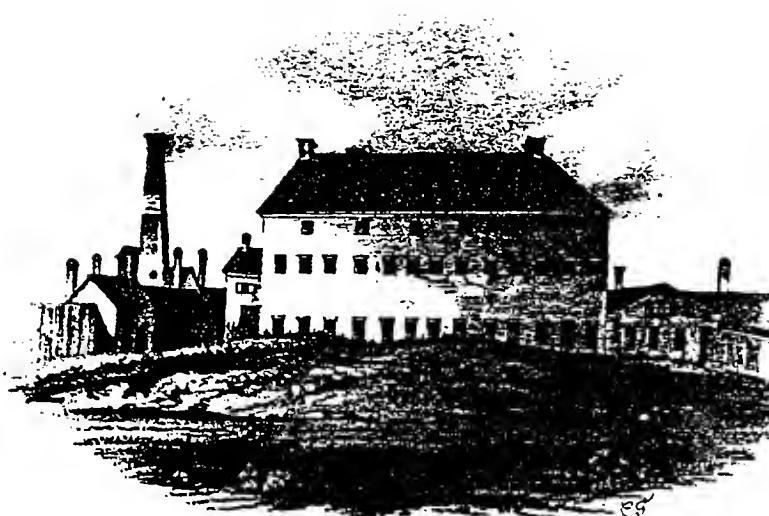
ADDRESS,

JOHN SOUTHER, Pres., or D. N. PICKERING, Treas.

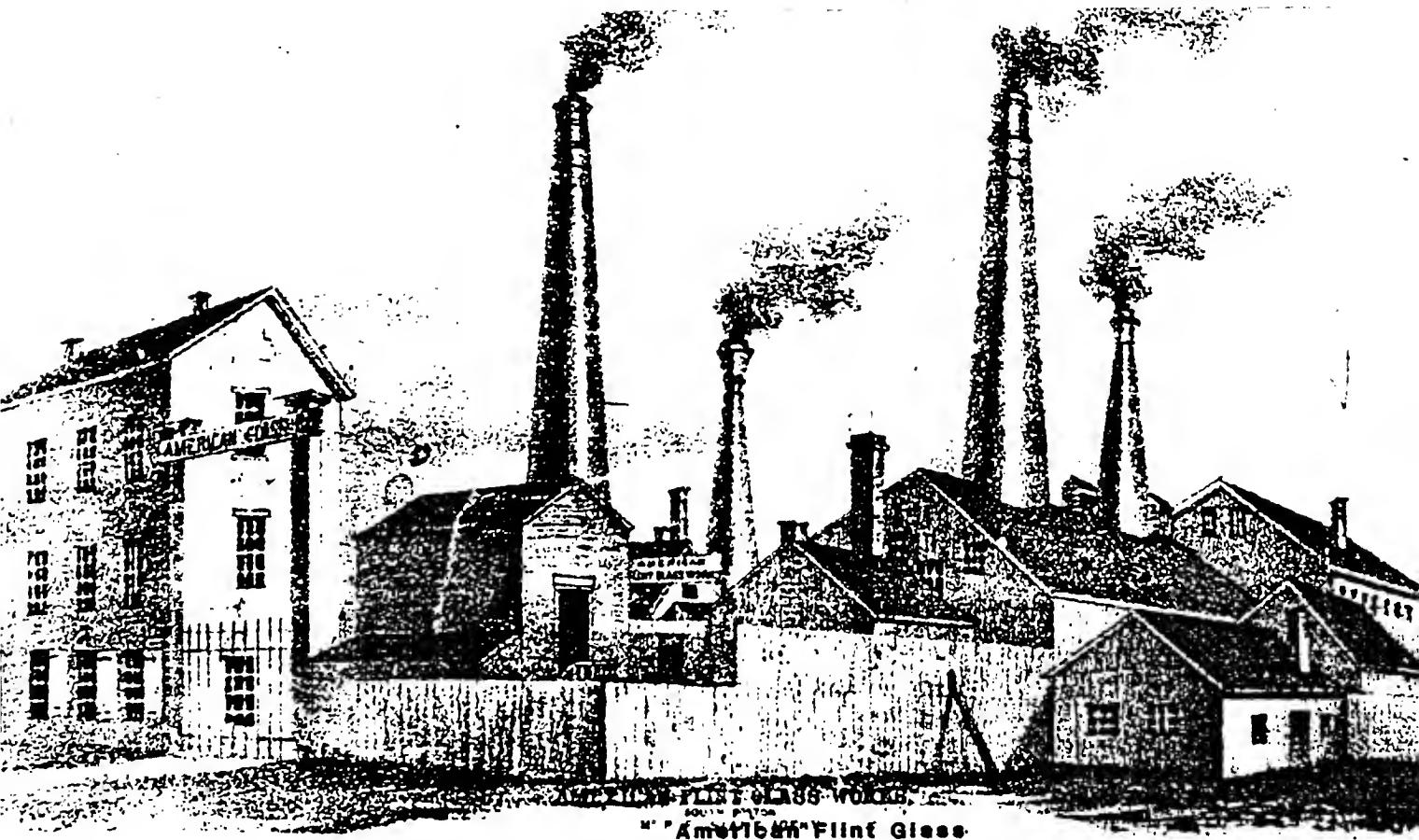




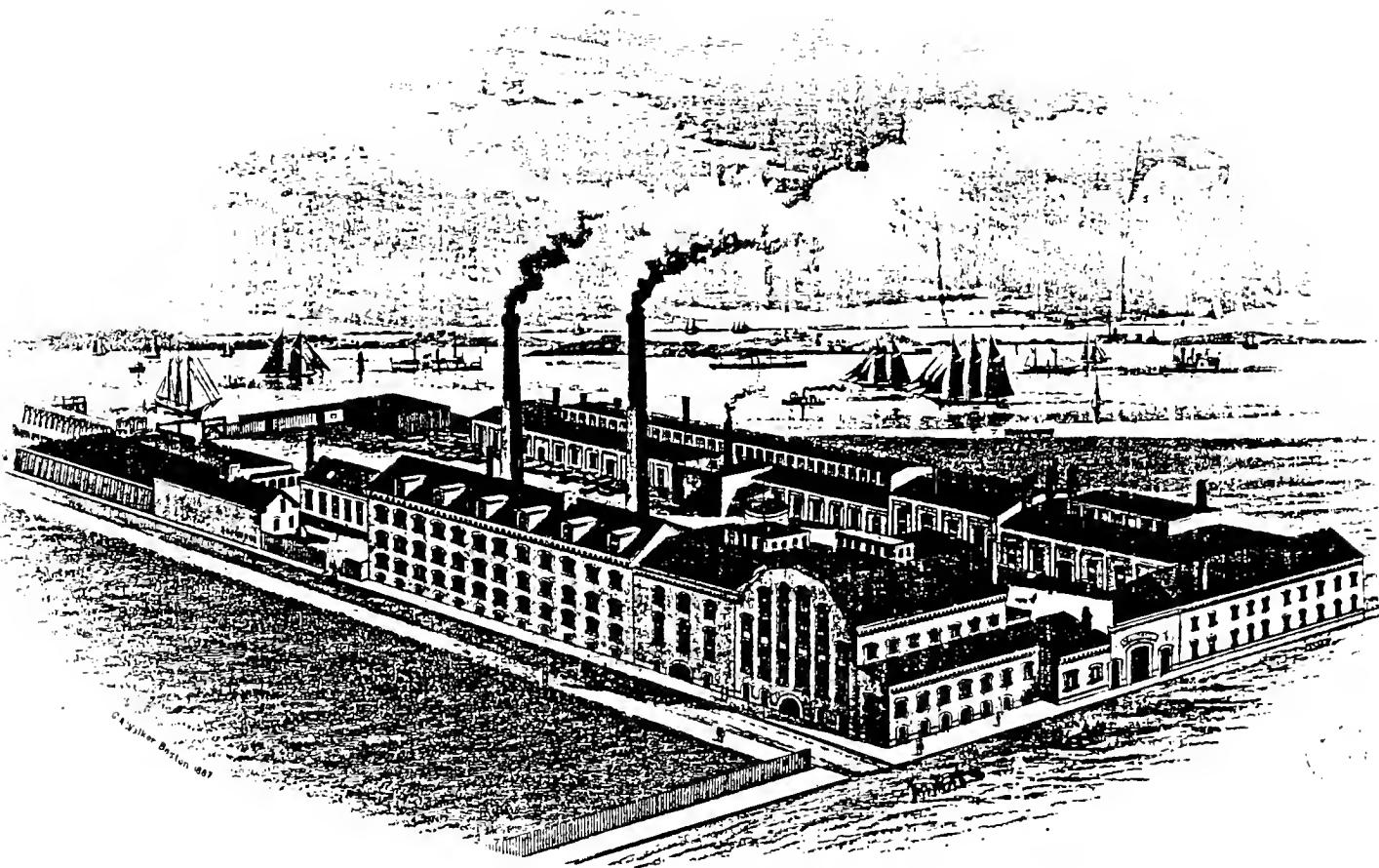
M. J. P. MONKS LUMBER YARD.
SECOND STREET
SOUTH BOSTON



SUFFOLK LEAD WORKS.
SOUTH BOSTON
M. J. WARD, AGENT, STATE STREET



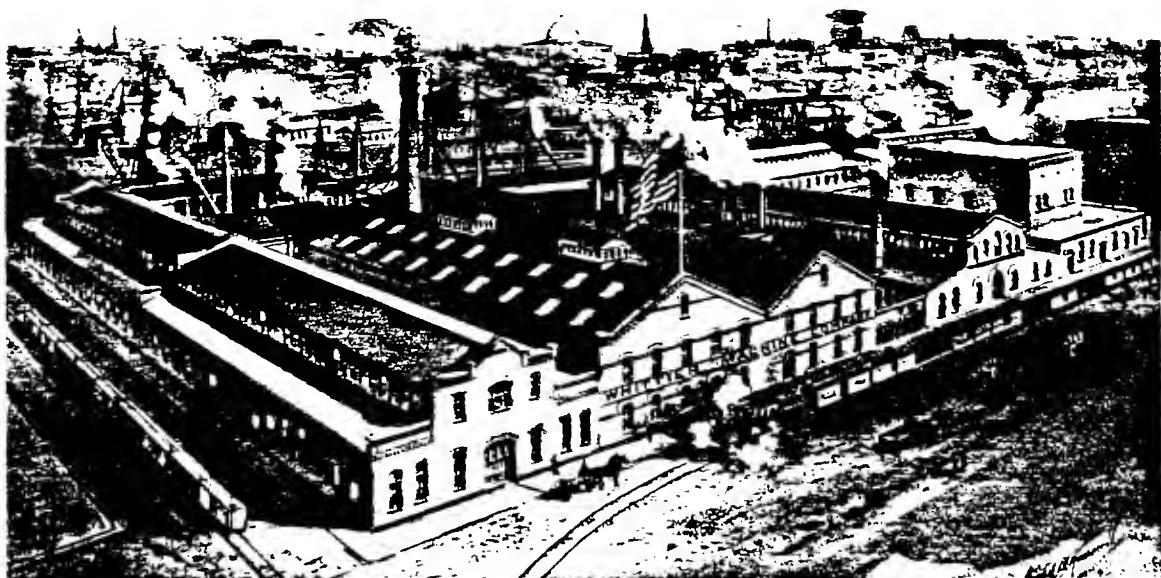
AMERICAN FLINT GLASS WORKS, LTD.
SOUTH BOSTON
"American Flint Glass"



WALLWORTH MANUFACTURING CO.

SOUTH BOSTON, MASS.
1881.
U.S.A.

EAST FIRST ST., corner O st.

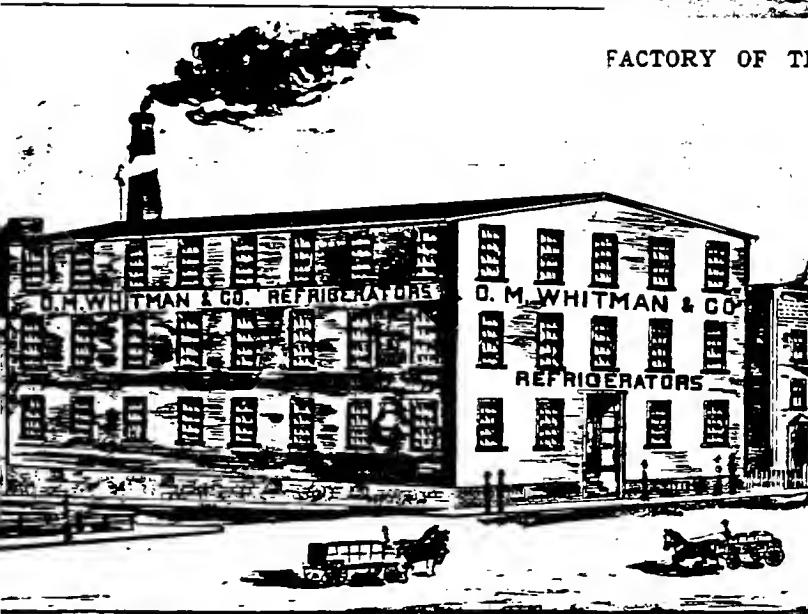


WORKS OF THE WHITTIER MACHINE COMPANY, Granite and First Streets, South Boston.

Manufacturers of Hydraulic, Electric, Steam and Belt Elevators, and Foundry and General Machine Work.
Established over fifty years. Down-town office, 53 State Street.

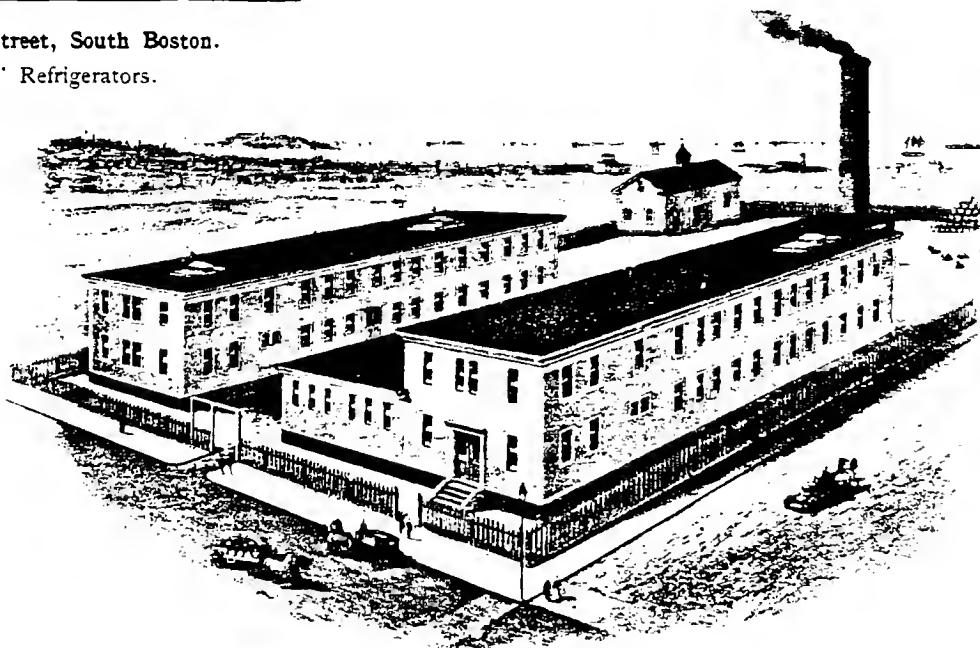


FACTORY OF THE BAY STATE BELTING COMPANY, corner A and Richards Streets, South Boston.



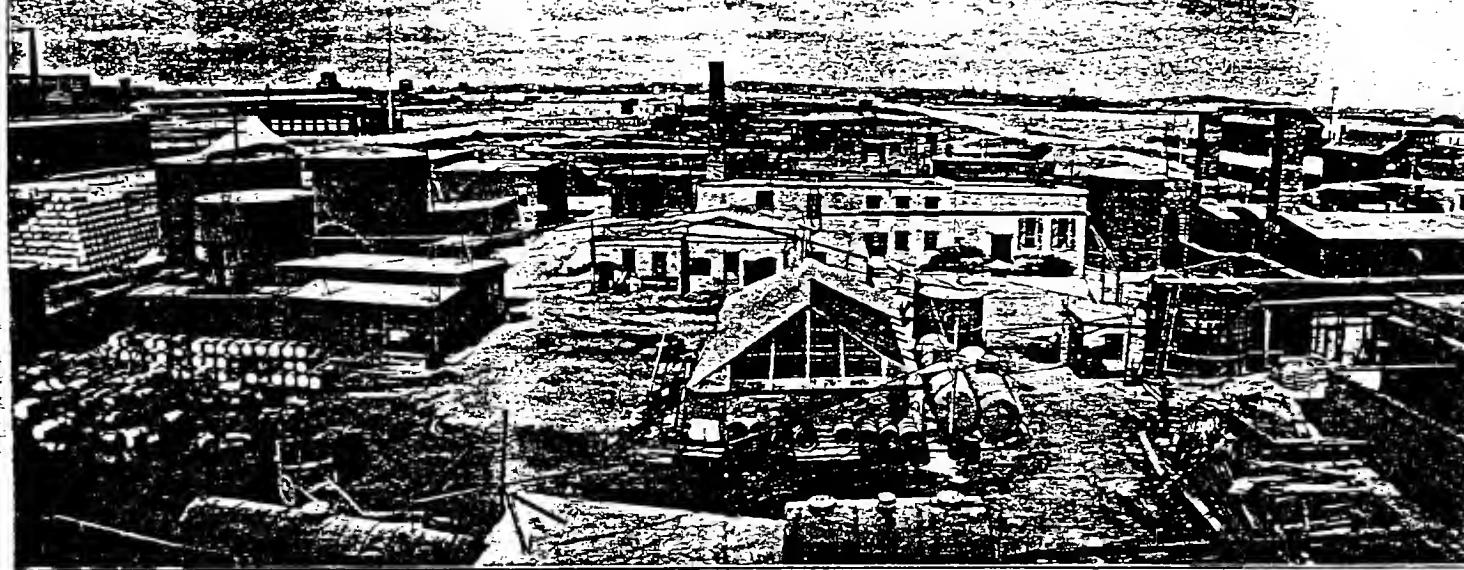
M. WHITMAN & CO., 82 and 84 Boston Street, South Boston.

Manufacturers of Whitman's Improved Grocers' Refrigerators.

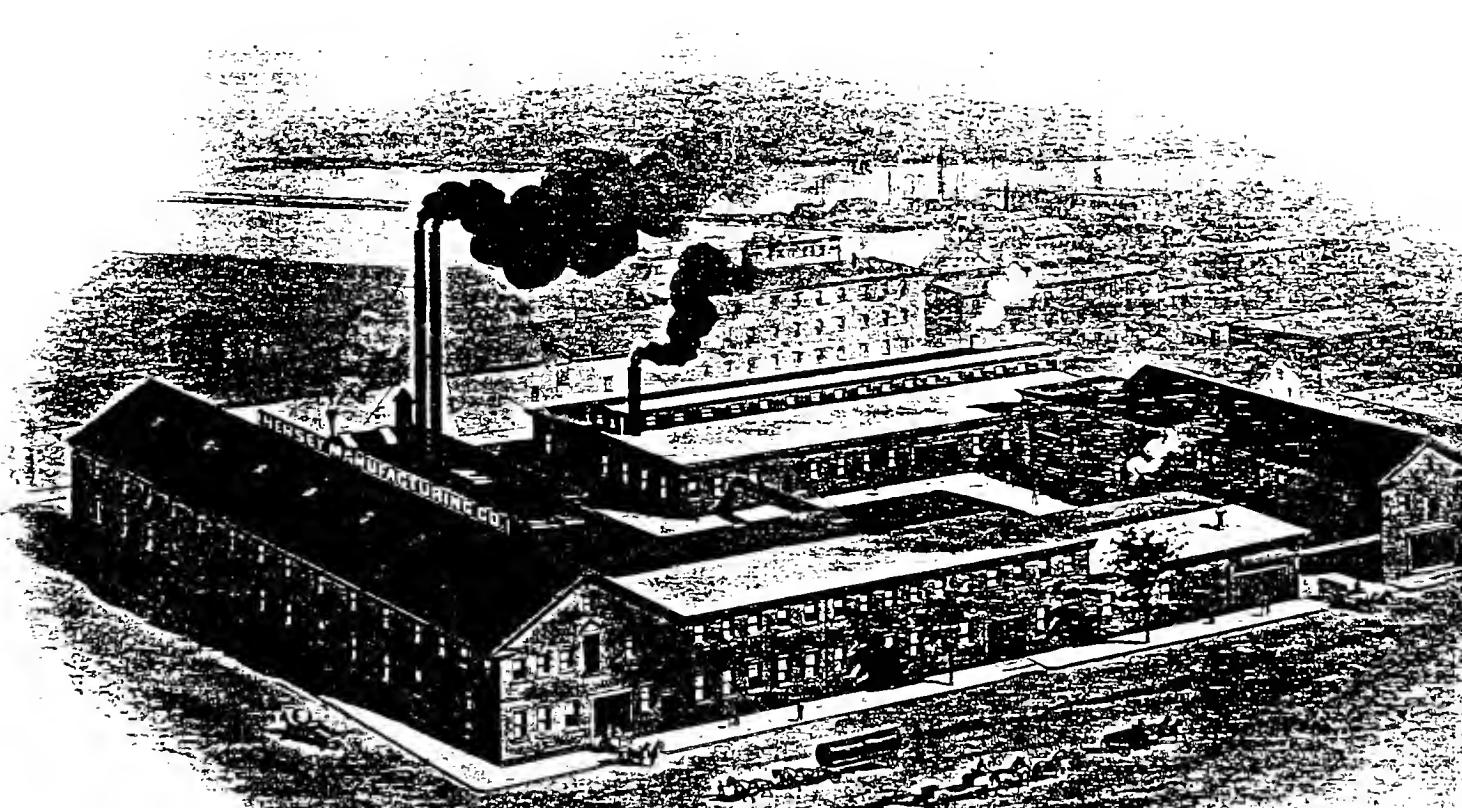


WORKS OF F. E. ATTEAUX & COMPANY, West First and D Streets, S.

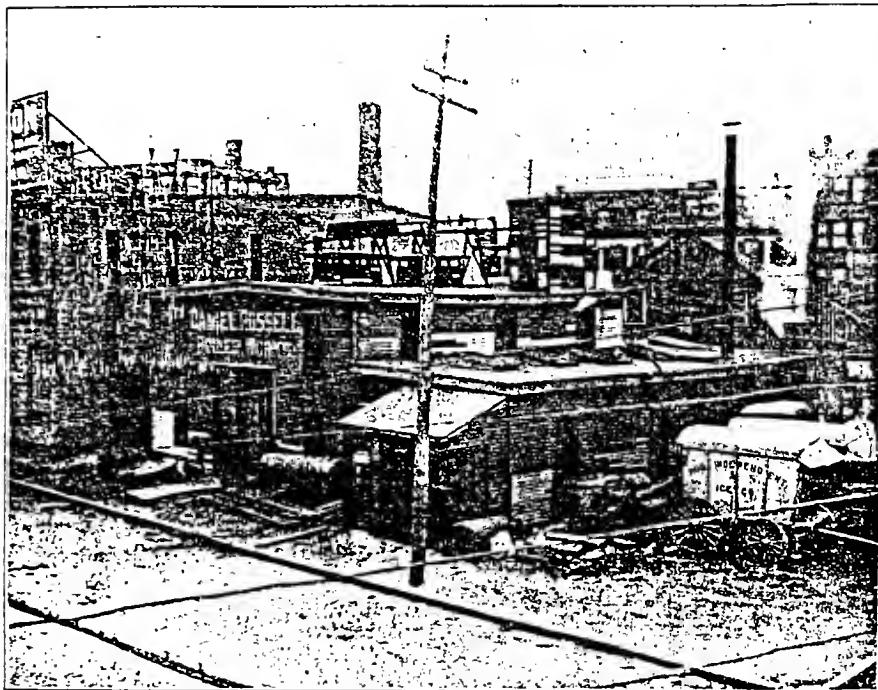
Manufacturers of Colors and Chemicals. Sales department: 172 to 178 Purchase.



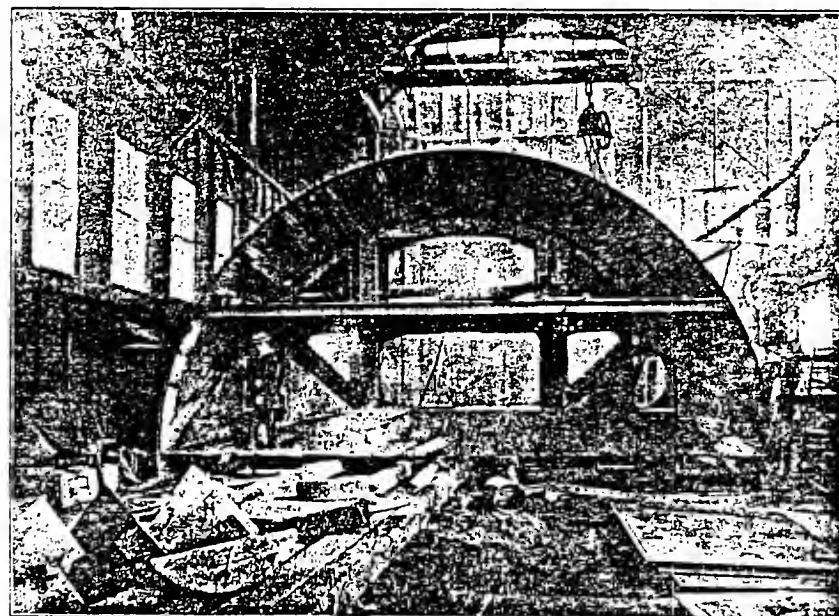
OIL WORKS OF THE JENNEY MANUFACTURING COMPANY.



WORKS OF THE HERSEY MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

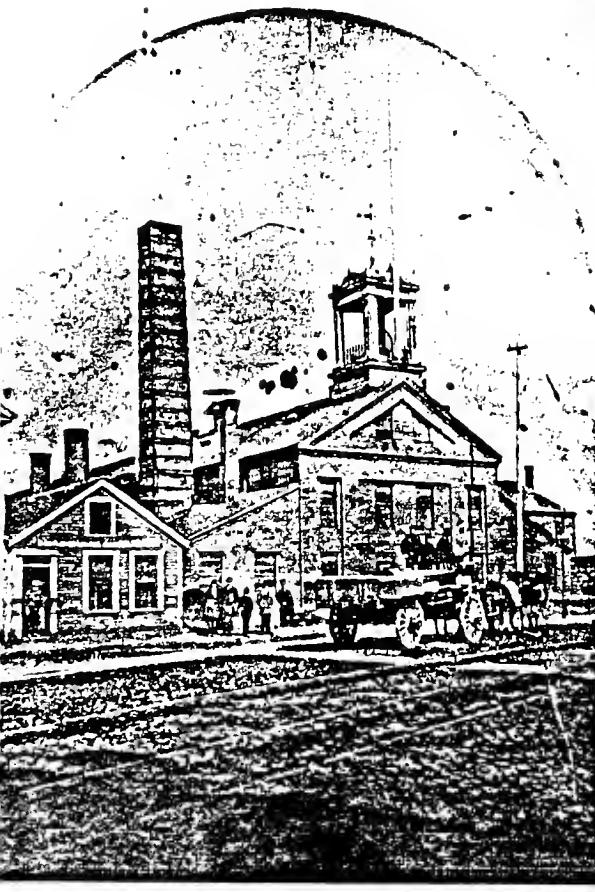


DANIEL RUSSELL BOILER WORKS.

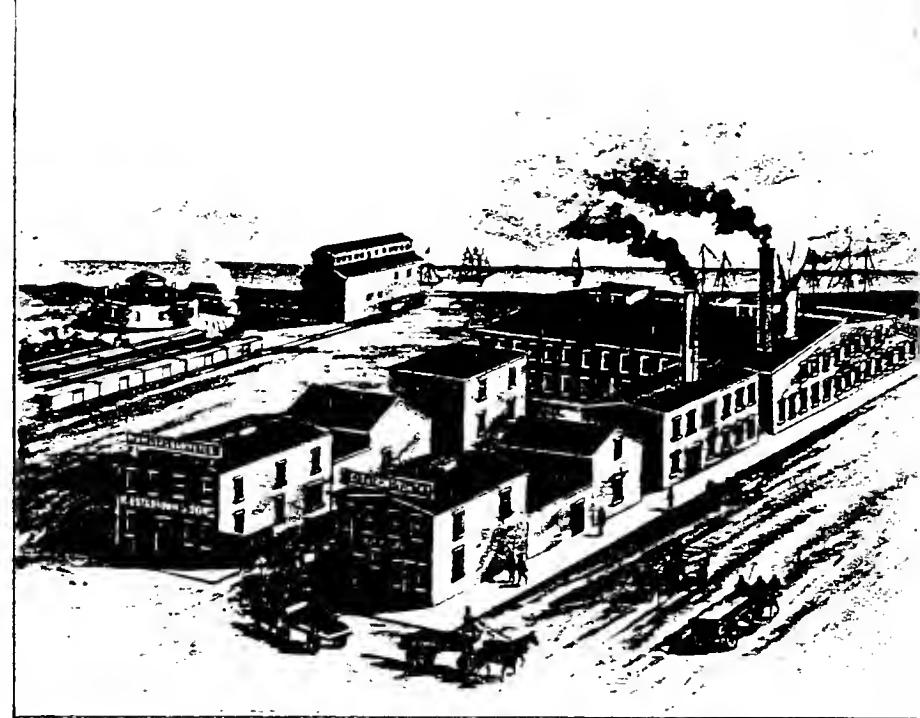


INTERIOR OF JAMES RUSSELL BOILER WORKS.

FOUNDRIES

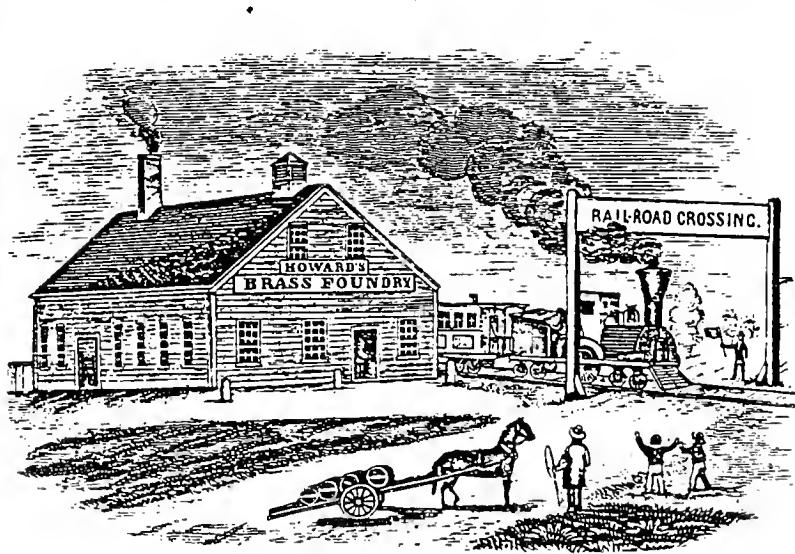


FULTON FOUNDRY



R. ESTABROOK'S SONS, CITY IRON FOUNDRY, First and C Streets
South Boston.

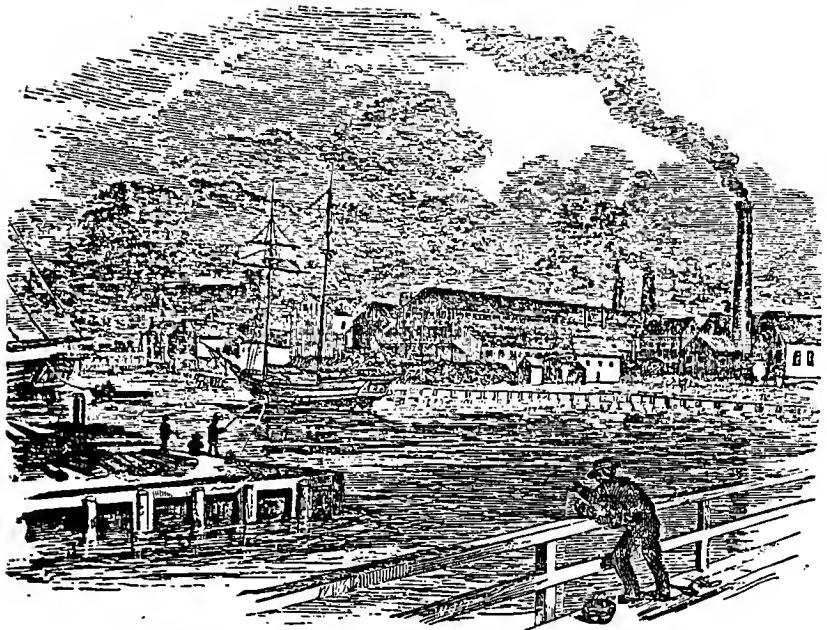
E. L. Estabrook, G. L. Estabrook, F. Estabrook. Manufacturers of Machinery, Boil Building Castings, Soil-pipe, and Fittings, etc., and Wholesale Dealers in Earth Brass and Copper Work, Boilers, Bath-tubs, and Plumbers' Supplies generally.



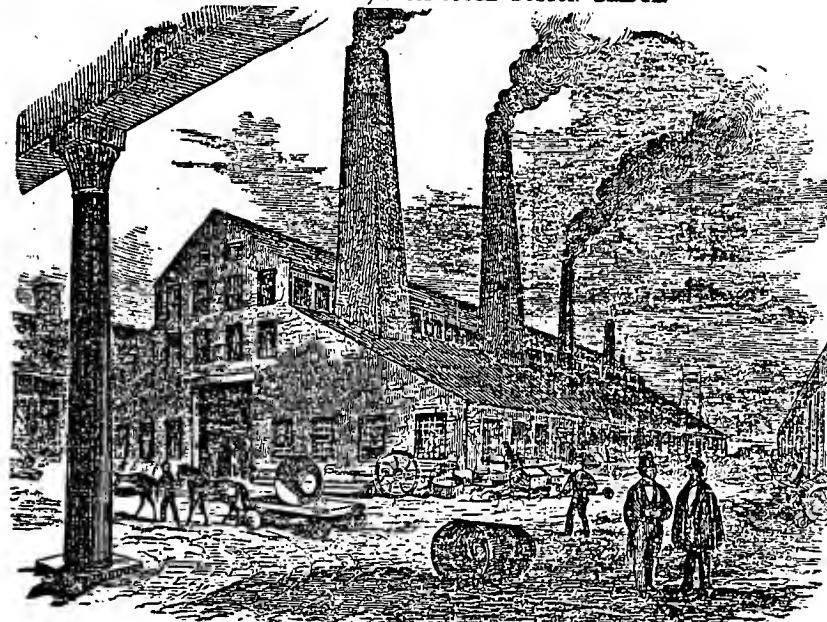
HOWARD & CO.,
BRASS & COPPER FOUNDRY
At Railroad Crossing, Turnpike Street, South Boston.

J. W. Howard.

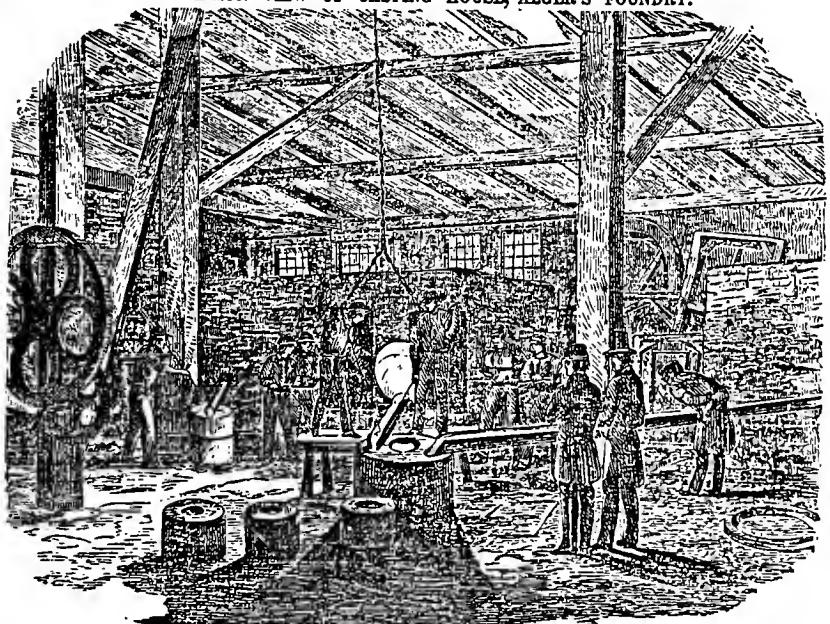
Stephen S. Nichols



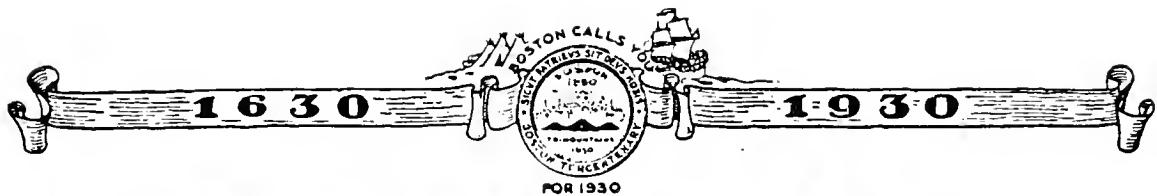
ALGER'S IRON FOUNDRY, FROM SOUTH BOSTON BRIDGE.



EXTERIOR VIEW OF CASTING HOUSE, ALGER'S FOUNDRY.

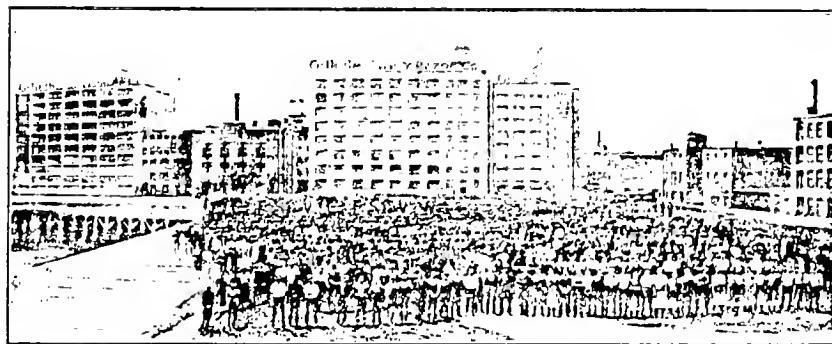


CASTING CANNON AT ALGER'S FOUNDRY.



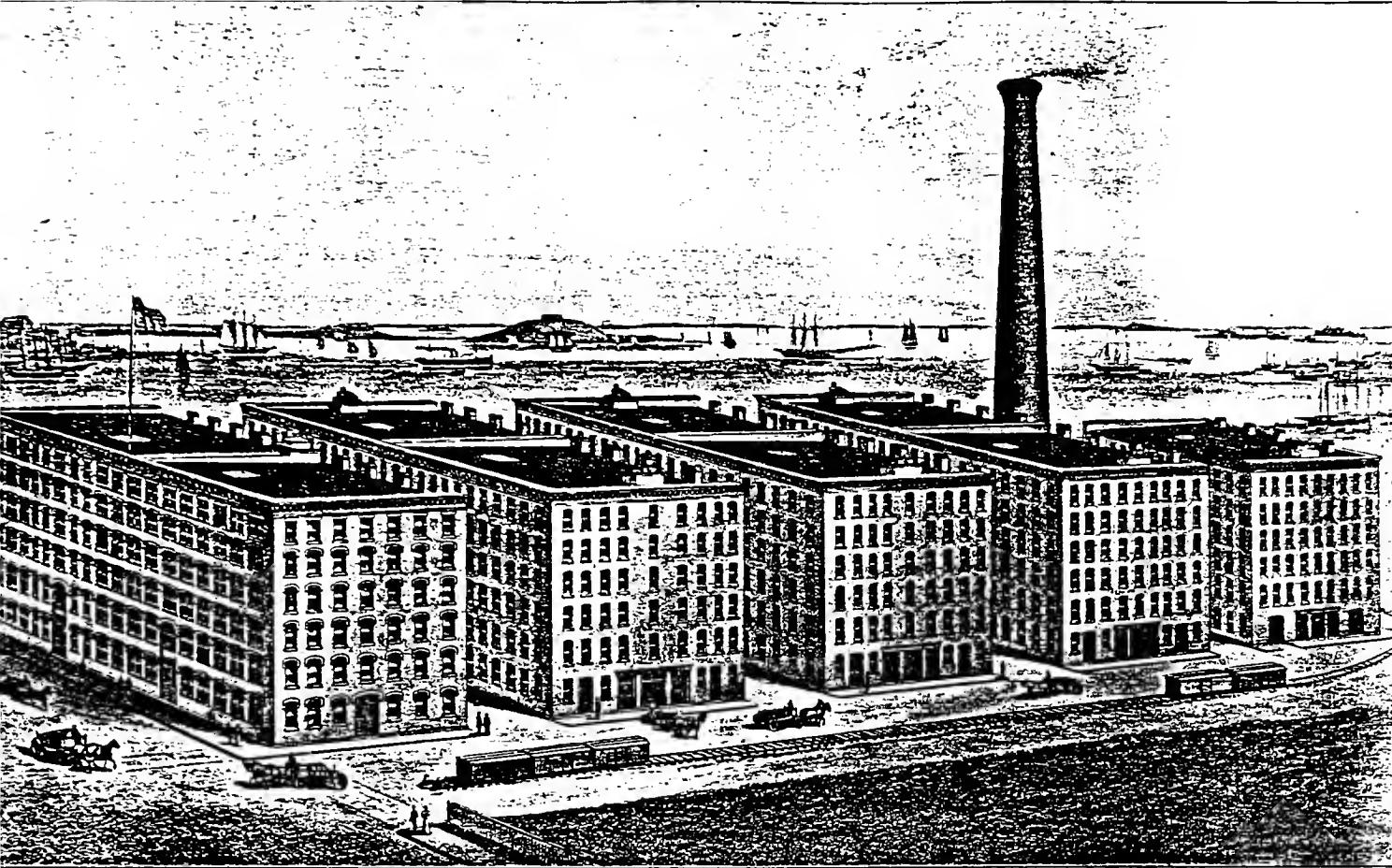
GILLETTE RAZOR AND BLADE
1901

Insert shows entrance to building at 394 Atlantic Ave., where The Gillette Safety Razor Co. started business in one room. NEW GILLETTE RAZOR AND NEW GILLETTE BLADE 1930.



GILLETTE SAFETY RAZOR COMPANY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The conception 27 years ago of the safety razor has developed into this great corporation, which now manufactures 150,000 razors and 2,500,000 blades each day. New buildings will soon increase this to 3,500,000 blades per day. The manufacture of the blades involves a precision of 0.0001 inch. The financial condition of the company is unusual, in 1926 the assets being \$50,000,000 and the current obligations only \$64,000.



BUILDINGS OF THE FACTORY BUILDINGS TRUST, A STREET.



From a photograph by Frank E. Porter

EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE BROTHERHOOD BASEBALL CLUB GROUNDS

Built about 1892 on land owned by the Boston Wharf Company, the site of the present buildings numbering 364 to 382 Congress Street, and lying between Pittsburgh Street and the railroad yards. It was on these grounds that the famous Mike Kelly used to play ball. In the foreground can be seen empty sugar-bags which were often spread out there to dry in the sun after being washed.

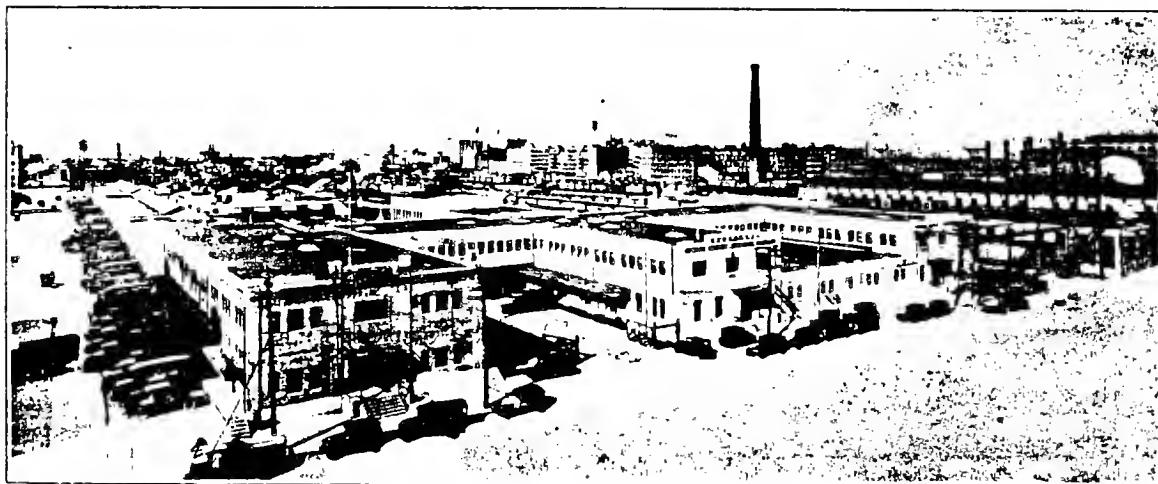


BOSTON MARKET TERMINAL CO.

The "Gateway to All New England"

INCORPORATED 1922

OPENED APRIL 4, 1927



Organized by the Wholesale Dealers & Commission Merchants of Boston for the sale of car lot receipts only, of Fruits & Vegetables. The Terminal Company is the medium through which the Merchants are furnished the facilities for the unloading and sale of Fruits and Vegetables in the Houses, on Platforms or Tracks.

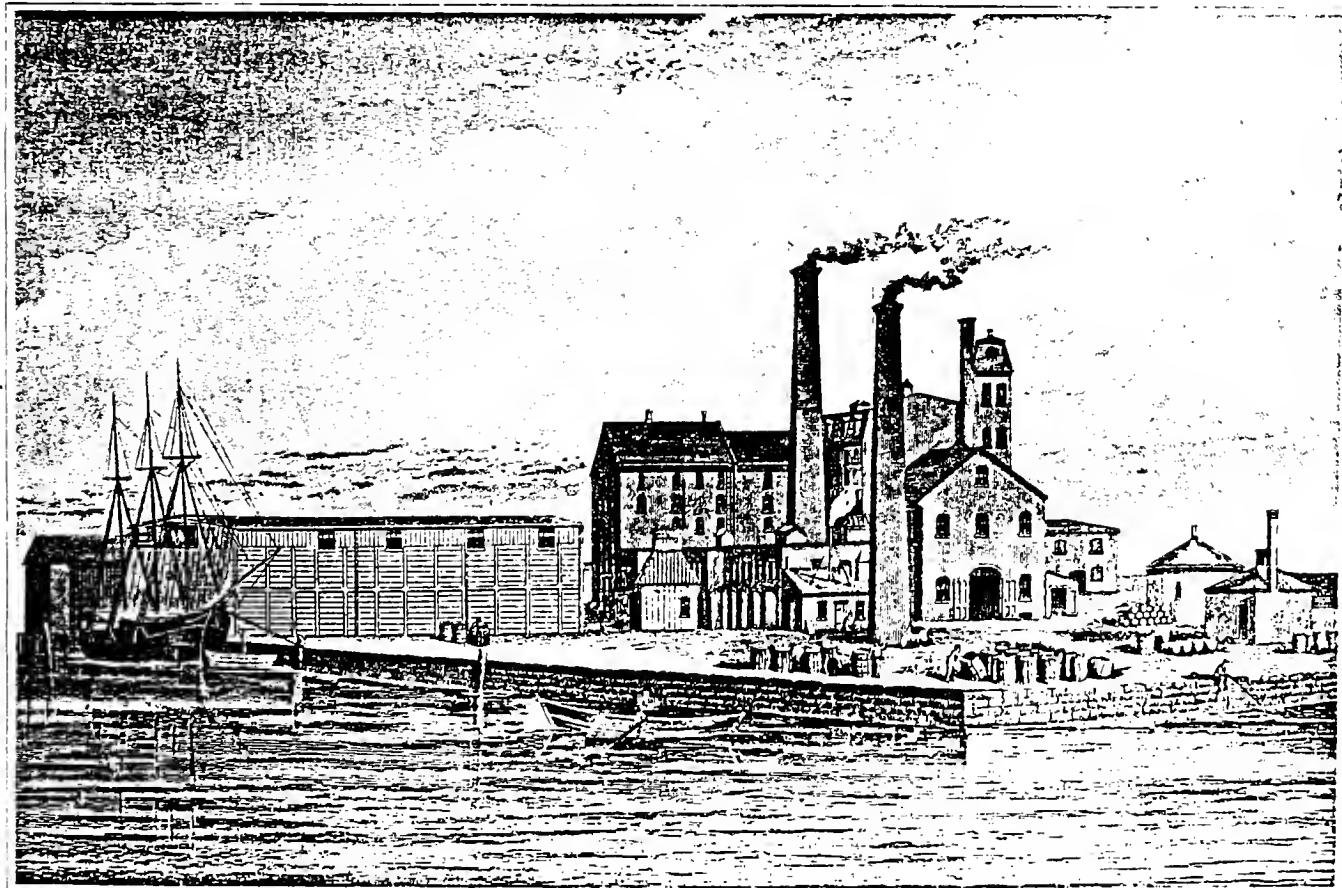
The Boston Market Terminal buildings, situated on the N. Y., N. H. & H. Railroad, consist of three Houses with an unloading capacity of two hundred and fifty (250) cars and a covered Platform, seven hundred and fifty (750) feet long, with tracks on either side. These Houses and Platforms, together with the track deliveries, permit the prompt handling of an unlimited number of cars.

The members are therefore in a position to speedily serve, not only approximately the nine million population of New England, but also the nearby Canadian Provinces.

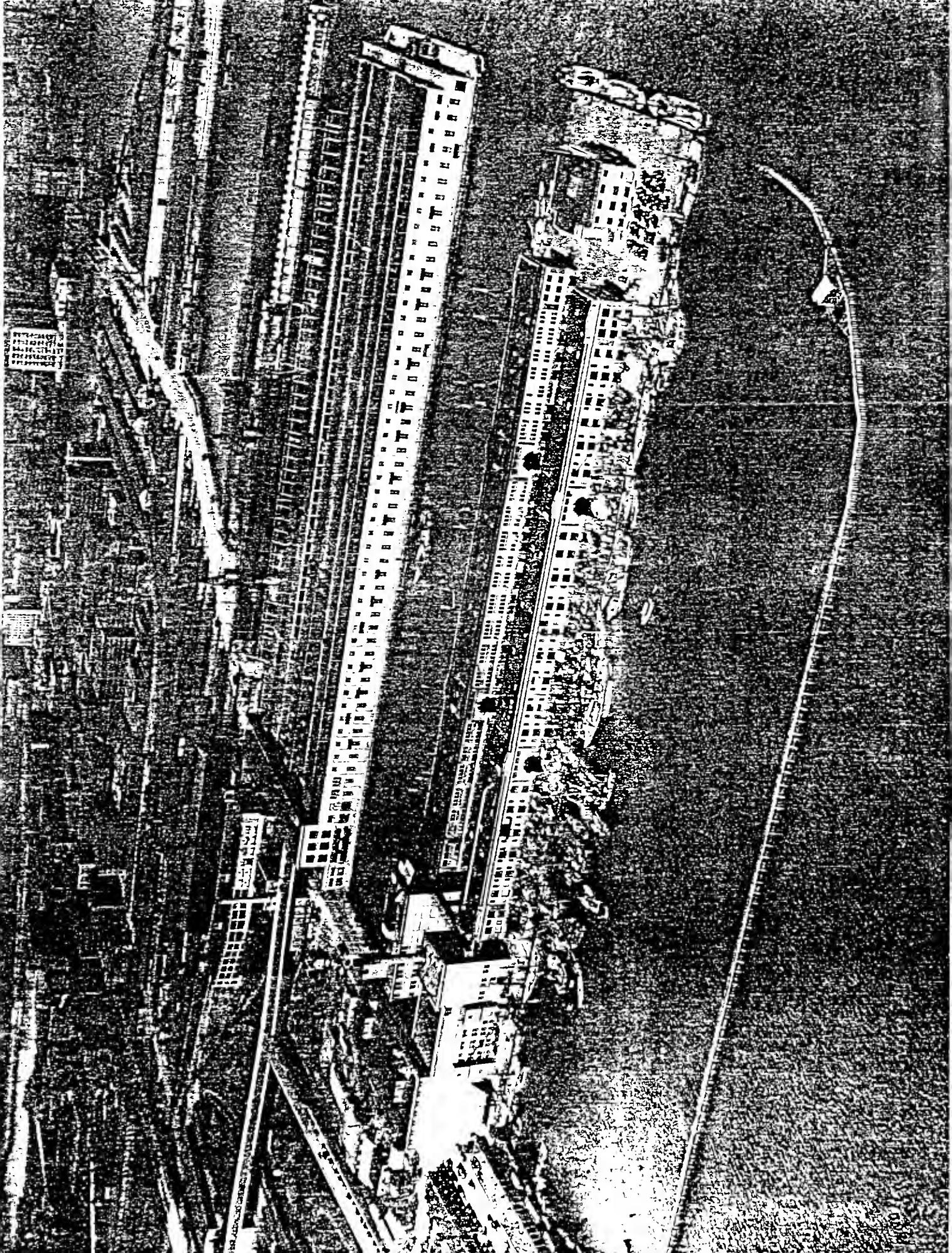


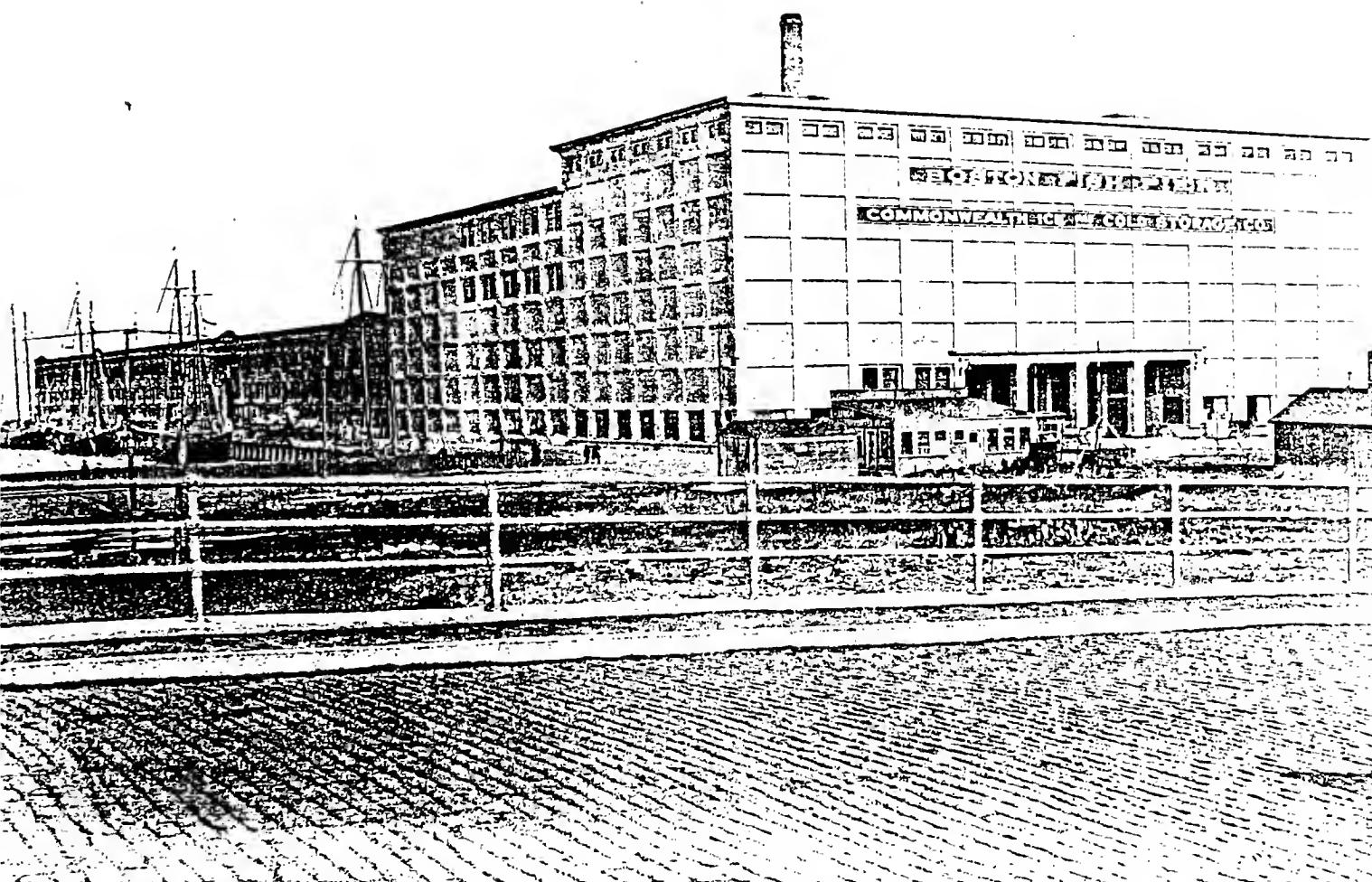
FOOD PRODUCTS

Many smaller vessels had regular business in carrying salted fish from the maritime province to the West India Islands, returning to Boston with sugar and molasses, then loading salt for the return trip to the Provinces. When the tariff allowing differentials to molasses was eliminated, there were often large stockpiles of molasses. On summer days the bungholes were left open to prevent bursting or cold water was sprayed on the hogsheads by fire engines.

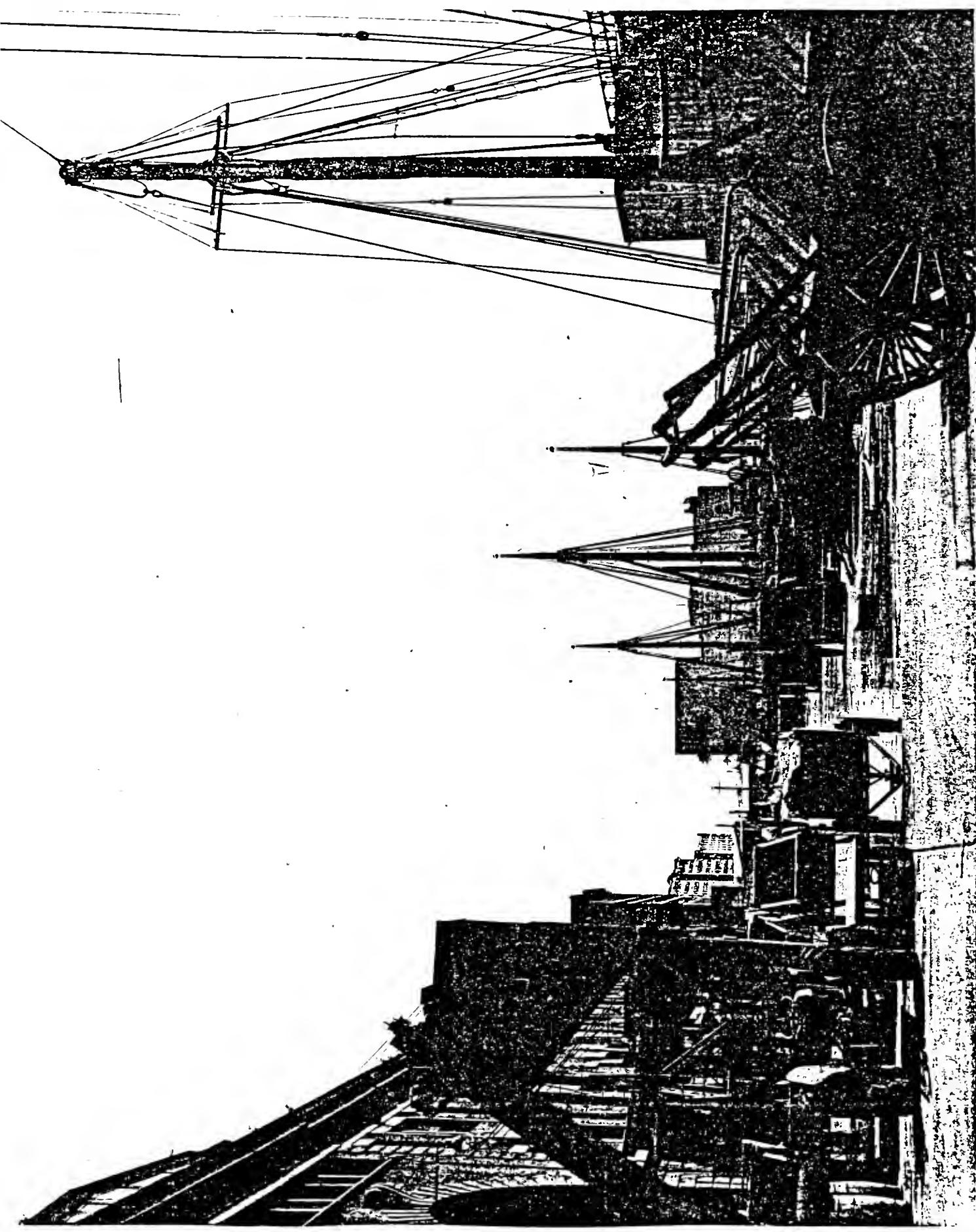


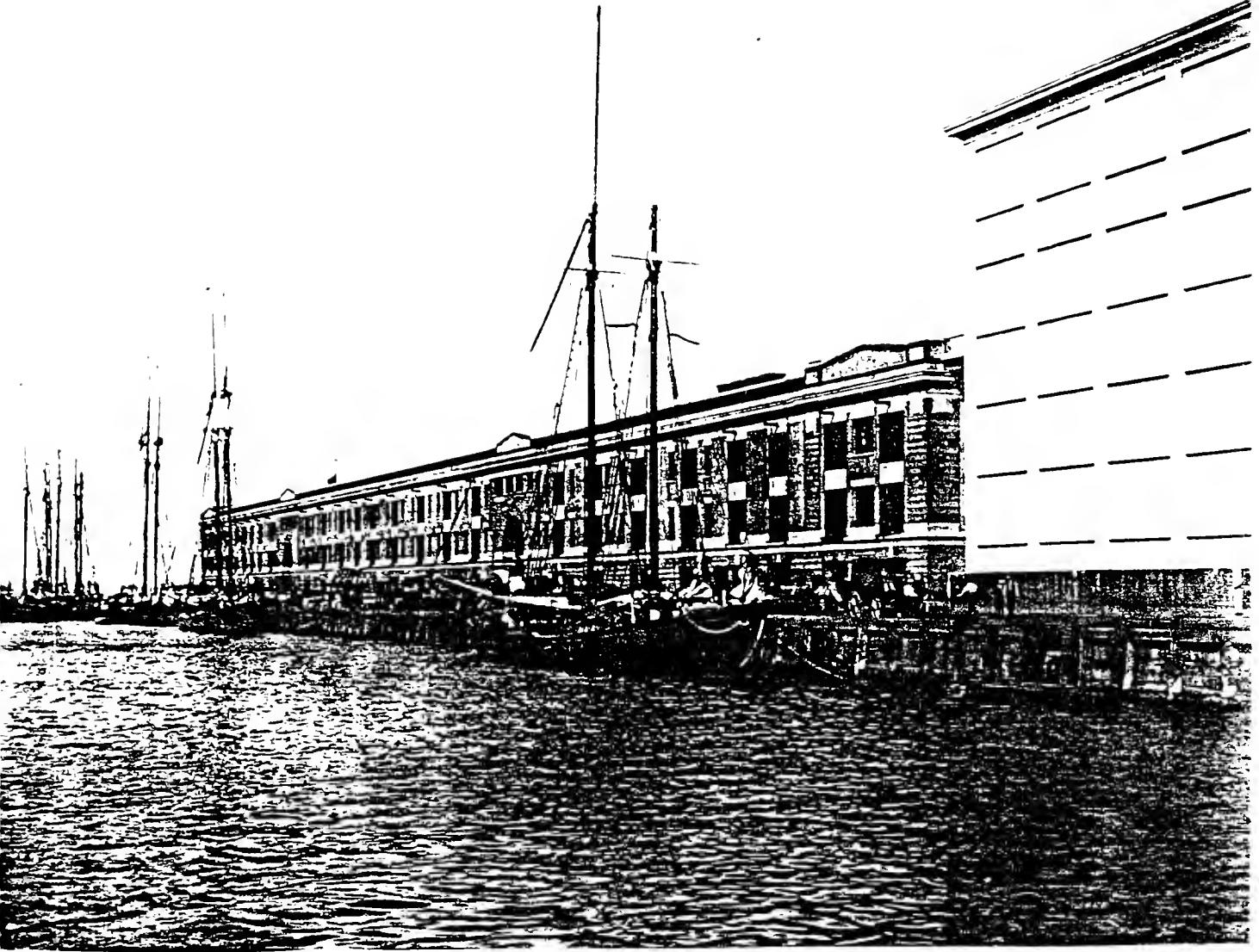
Sugar refinery, Boston





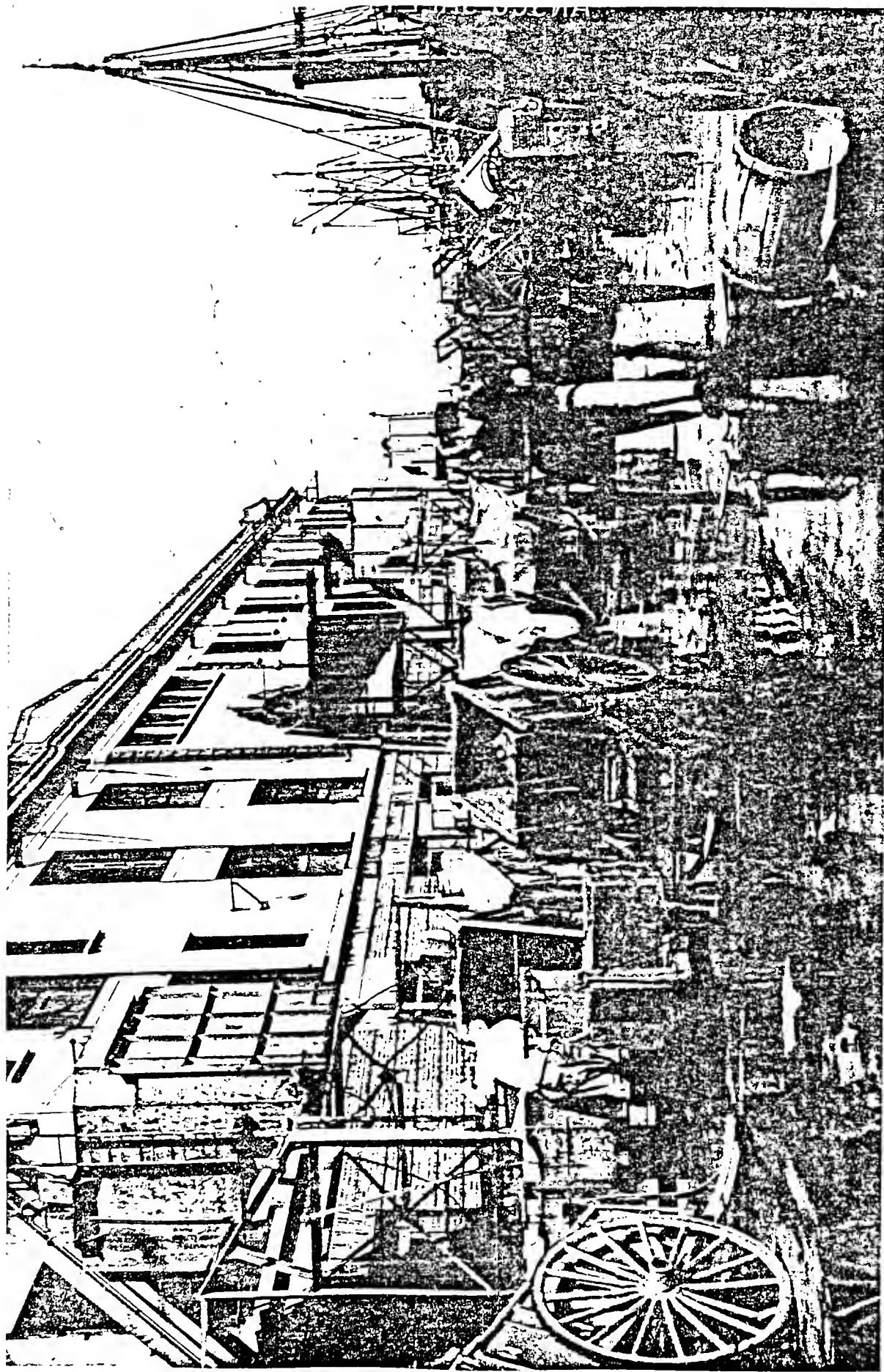
THE NEW BOSTON FISH PIER, SOUTH BOSTON

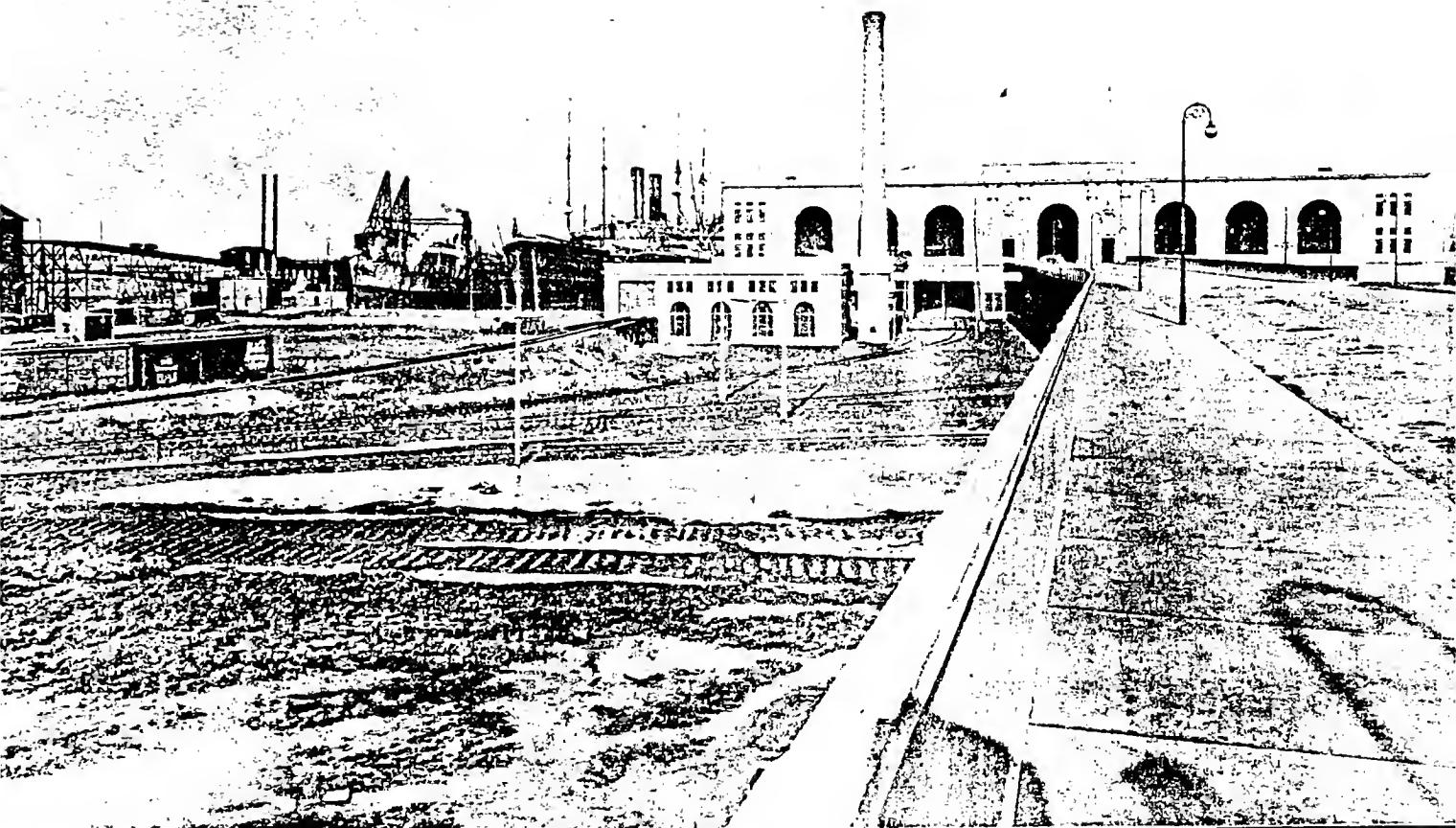




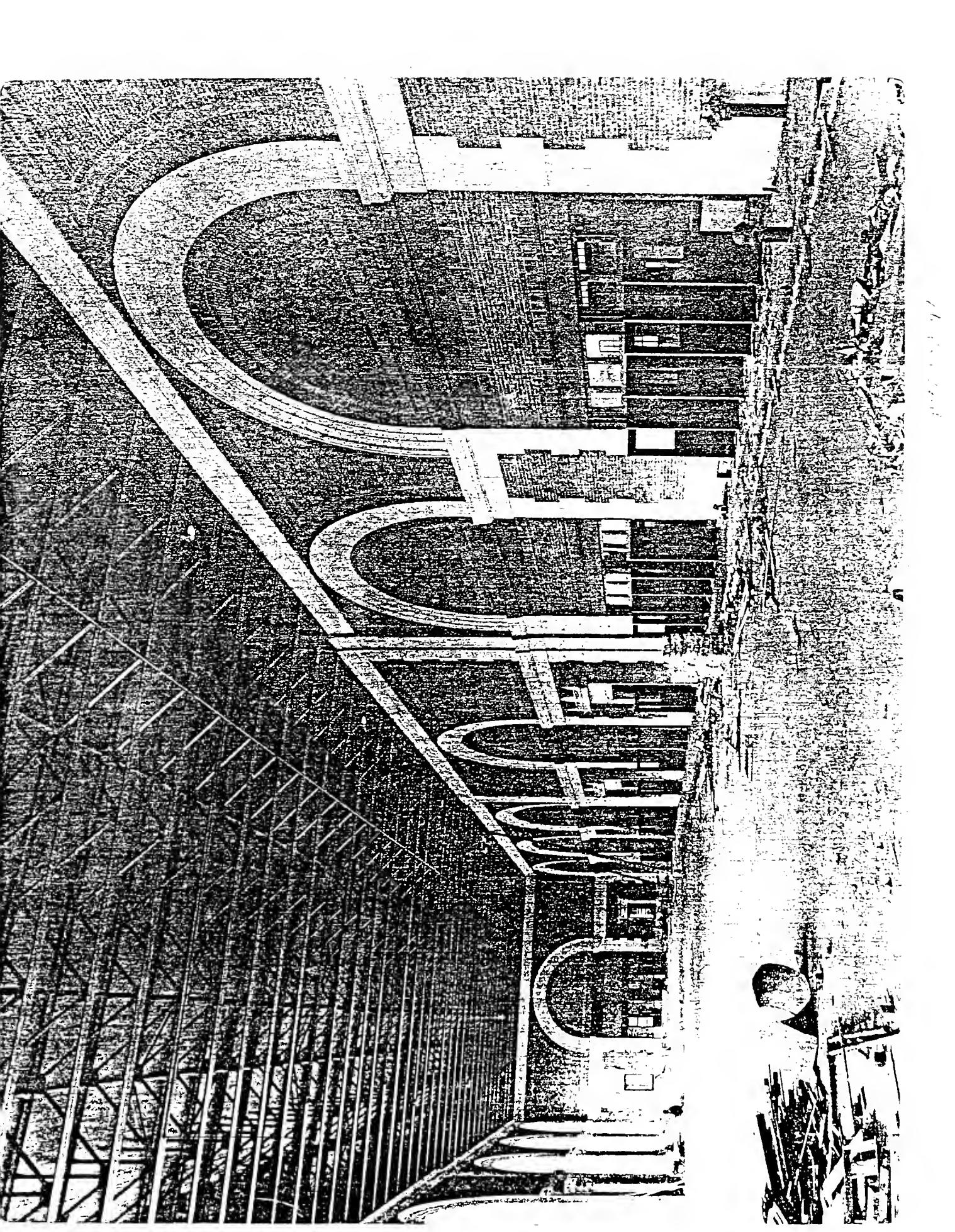
FISH PIER







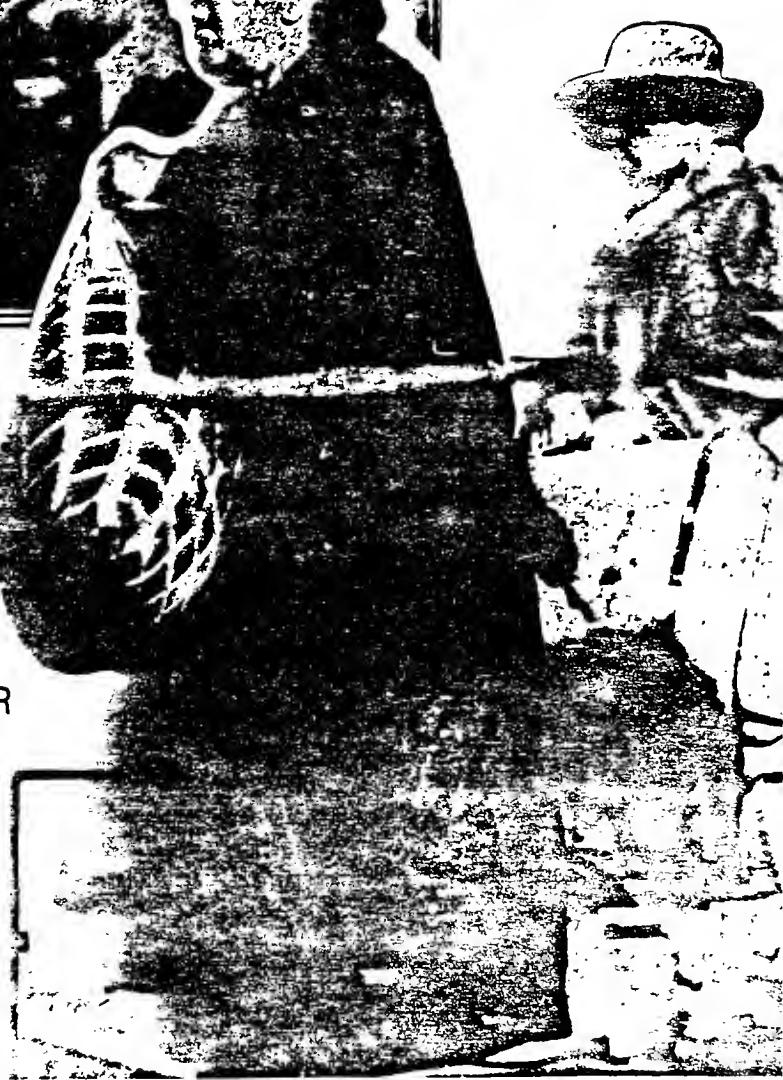
A VIEW OF THE BIG COMMONWEALTH DOCKS, SOUTH BOSTON

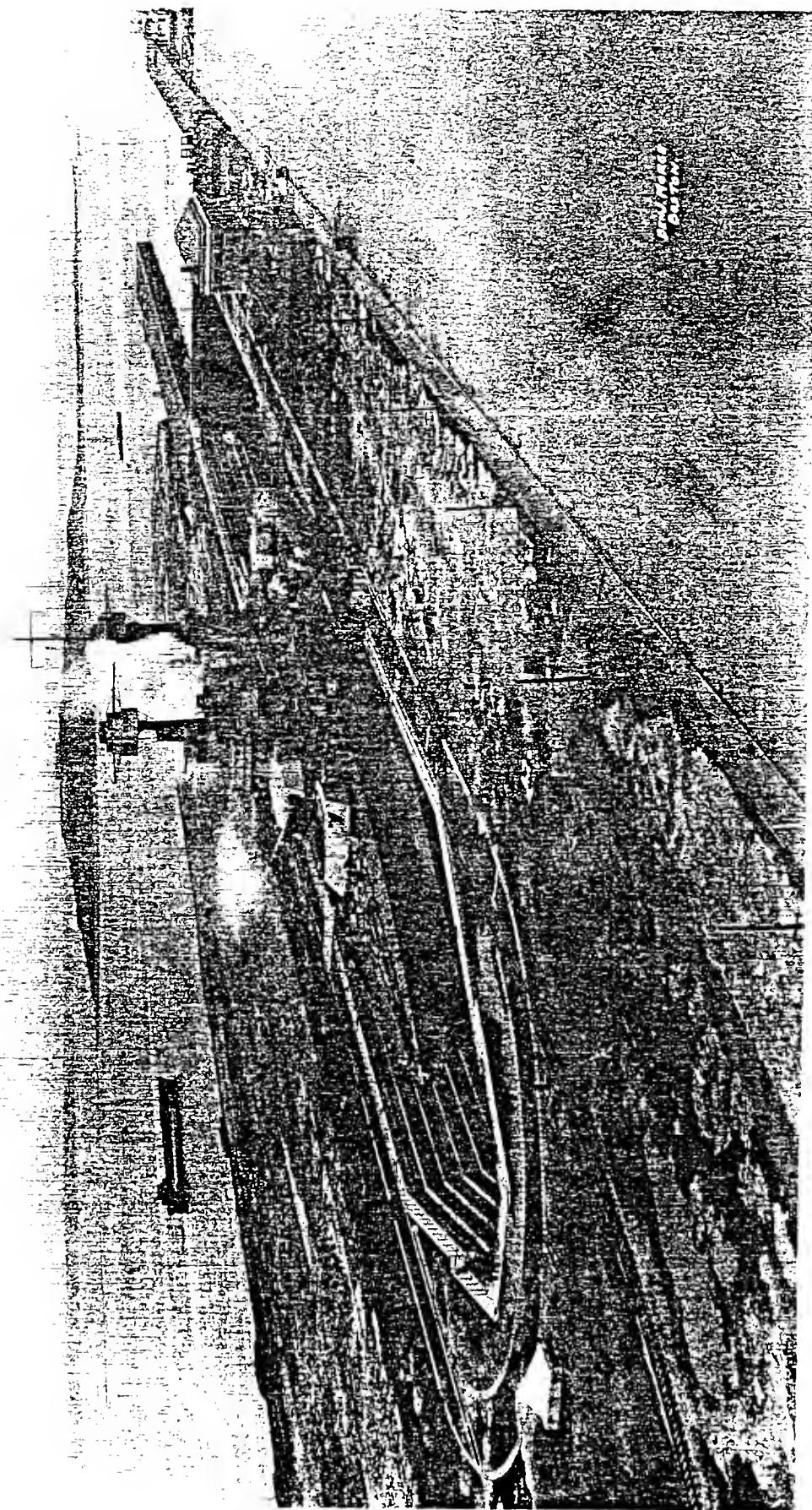


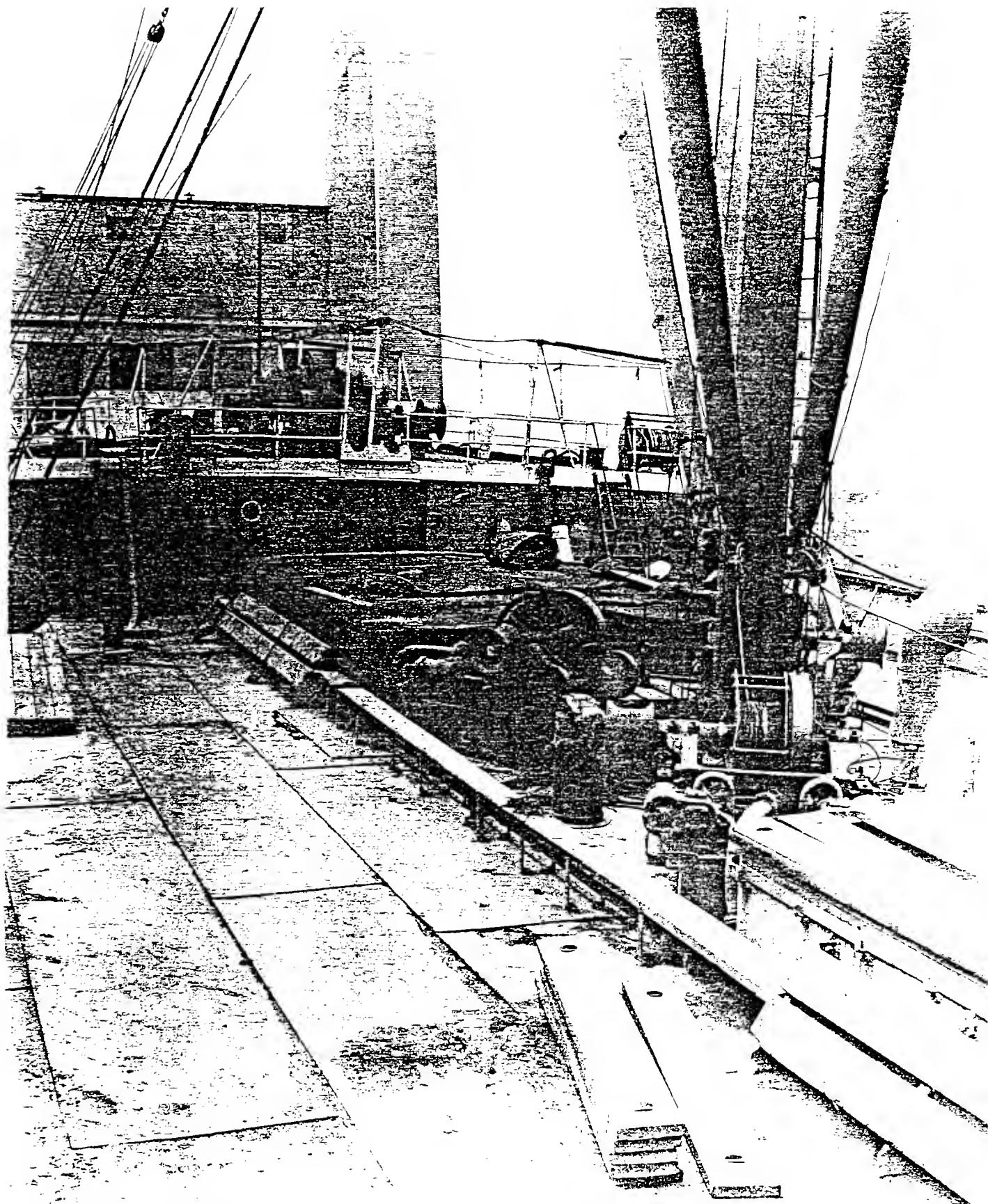


Boston's Ellis Island

COMMONWEALTH PIER







ARMY BASE

Compiled by Sandra Swaile,
Urban Design Department

PUMPING PLANT
COMMONWEALTH DRY DOCK
BOSTON MASS
CONSTRUCTED BY
WORTHINGTON PUMP
AND
MACHINERY CORPORATION
FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION ON WATERWAYS
AND
PUBLIC LANDS

JOHN N COLE CHAIRMAN

Author: Urban Design
Title: Ft. Point Channel History

Date Issued to

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